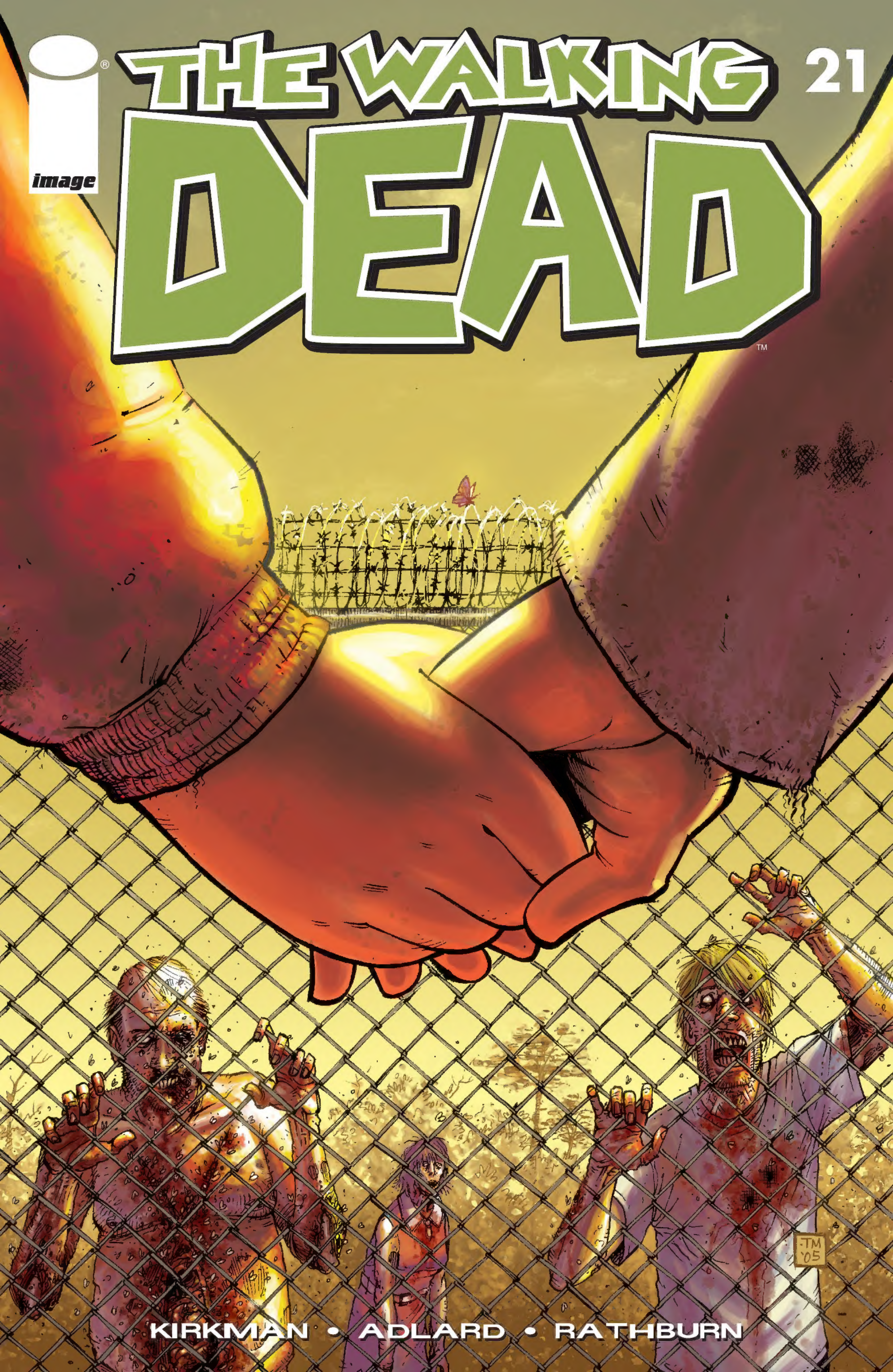




THE WALKING DEAD

21



KIRKMAN • ADLARD • RATHBURN

TM
'05

IMAGE COMICS PRESENTS

THE WALKING DEAD™

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MAN--IF THIS
THING WORKS--IT
COULD CHANGE
EVERYTHING. WE
COULD--WELL--IT'S
ELECTRICITY...
JESUS.

I KNOW,
DALE--DO
YOU THINK IT
WORKS? IT
LOOKS LIKE
IT'S IN GOOD
SHAPE.

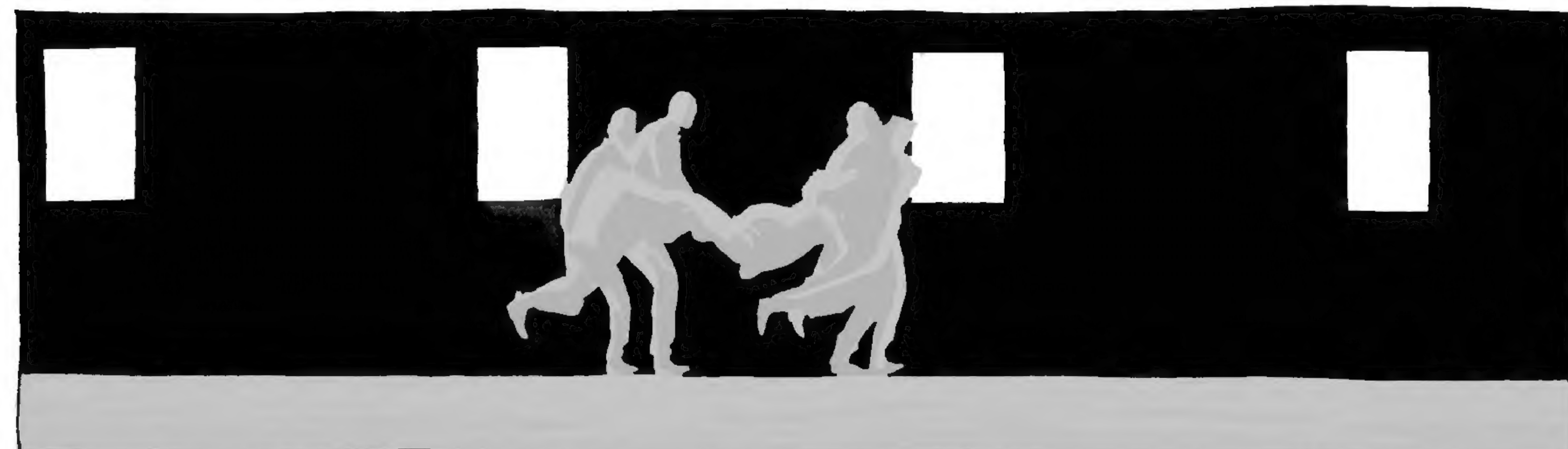
OH
GOD!!

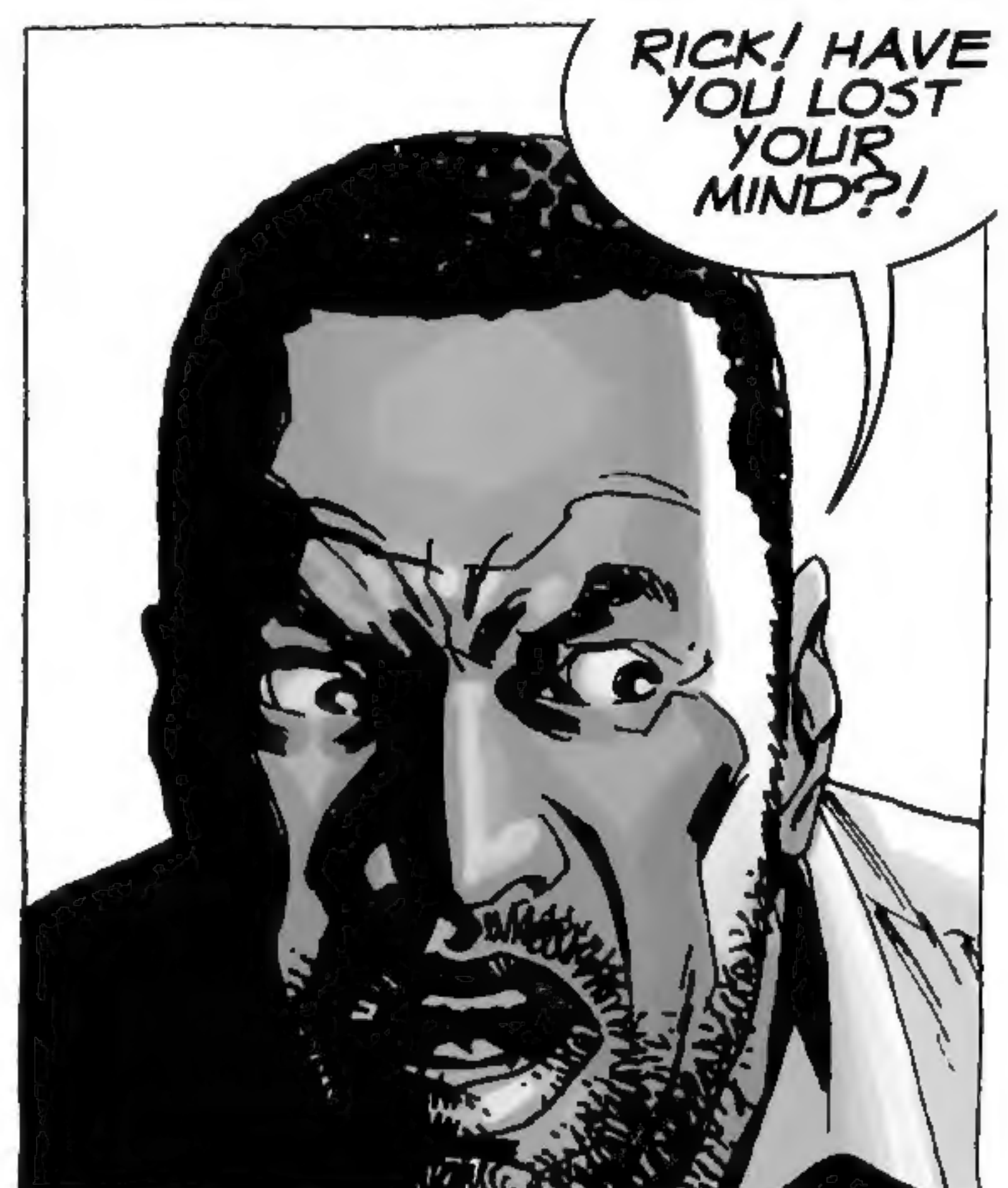
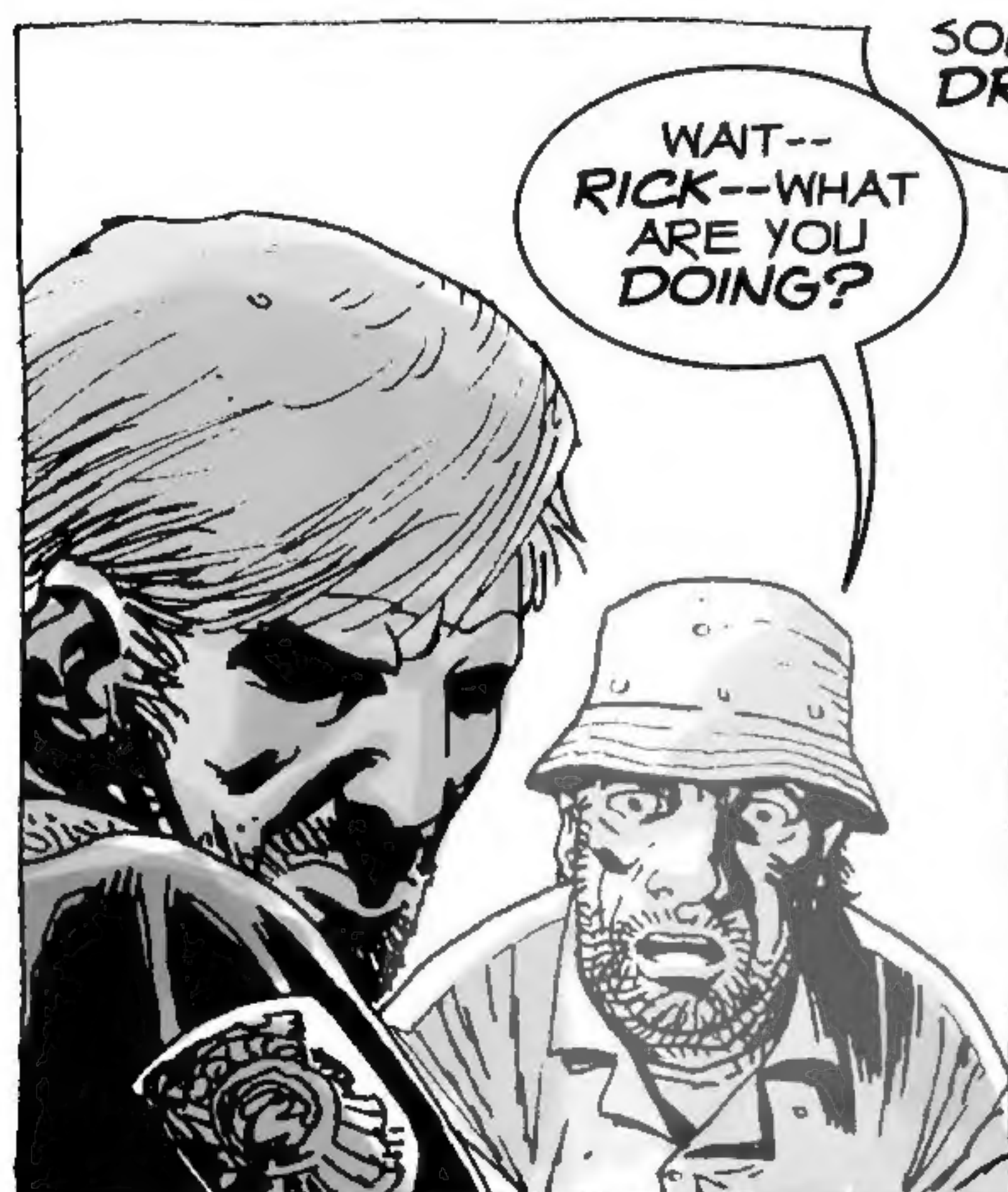
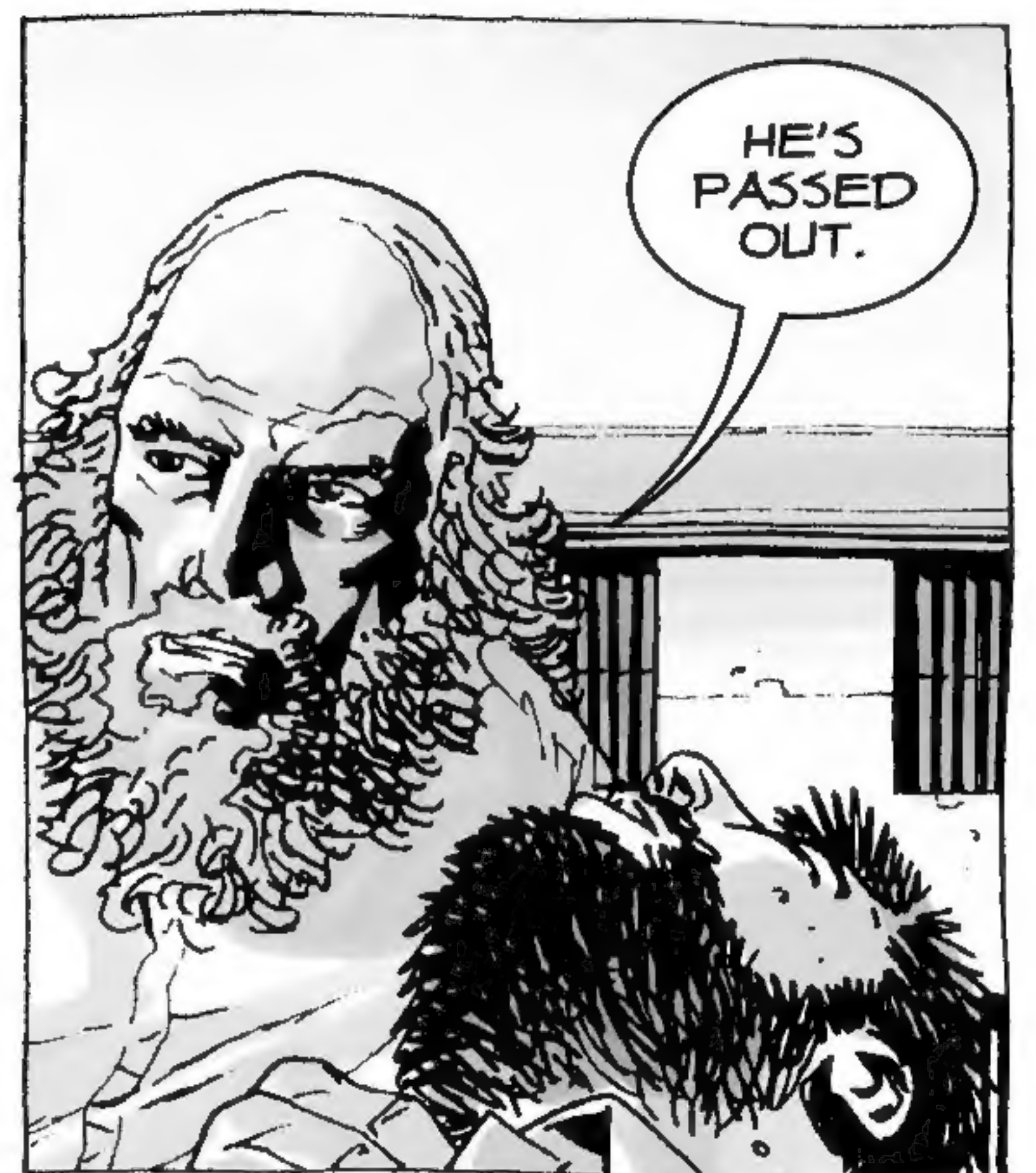
SHIT! THAT
SOUNDED LIKE
ALLEN!

I KNOW--
DAMMIT--THOSE
SHOTS WE HEARD--
I HOPE HE HASN'T
DONE SOMETHING
STUPID!

SHIT!







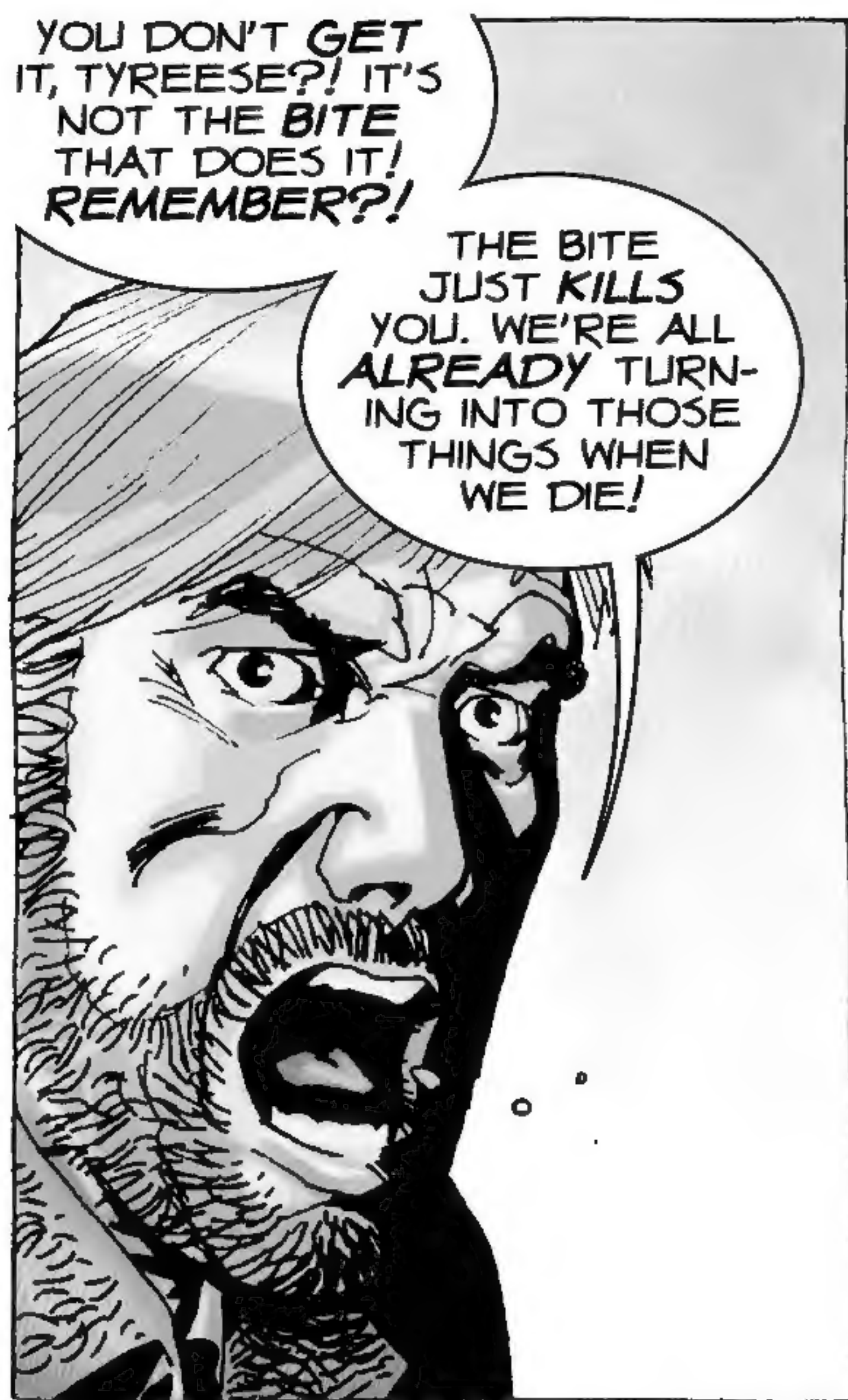


I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU MUTILATE HIM!

LET GO OF ME, TYREESE!!



RICK--HE'S A DEAD MAN--YOU'RE JUST GOING TO TORTURE HIM--RUIN HIS LAST DAYS. DON'T DO THIS.



YOU DON'T GET IT, TYREESE?! IT'S NOT THE BITE THAT DOES IT! REMEMBER?!

THE BITE JUST KILLS YOU. WE'RE ALL ALREADY TURNING INTO THOSE THINGS WHEN WE DIE!



SO WHY WOULD YOU CUT HIS LEG OFF?!



SO HE'LL LIVE!!



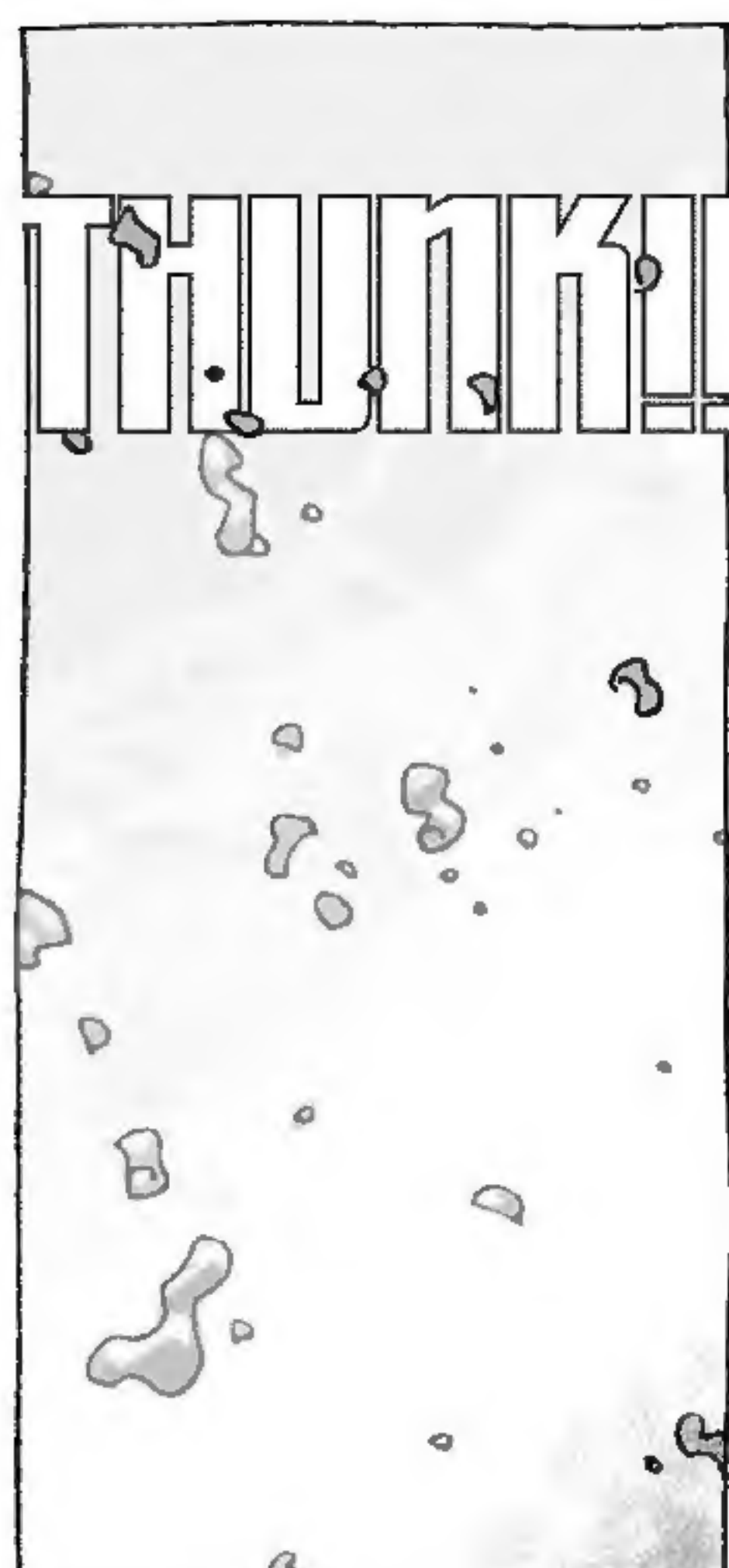
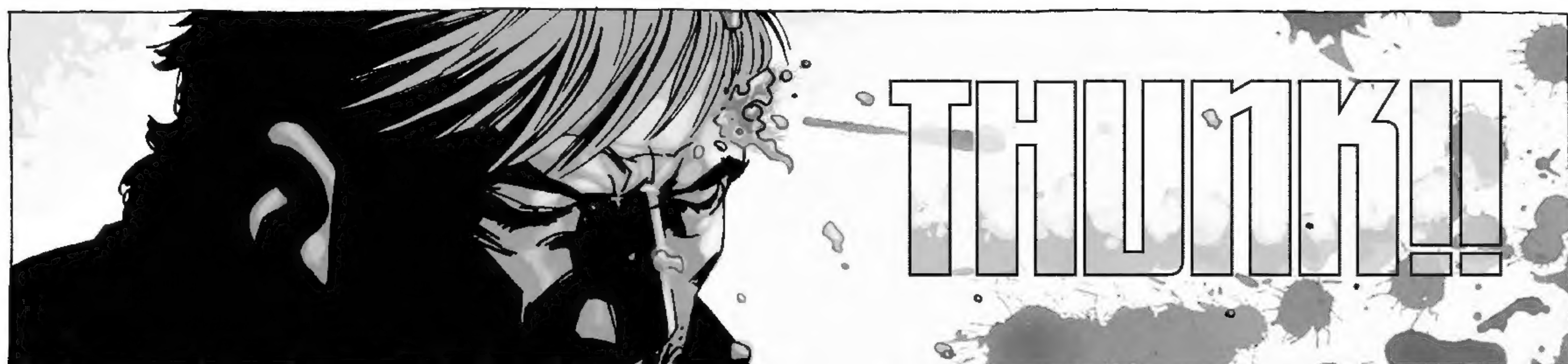
IF WE CAN CUT OFF THE BITTEN AREA--AND CLEAN THE WOUND--HE MAY JUST LIVE. THE BITES KILL! WE'VE SEEN IT.



HIS ONLY CHANCE IS TO GET RID OF THE BITE!!



I HAVE TO DO THIS!!!



AAAAHHH!!



HE'S LOSING A LOT OF BLOOD-- WE'VE GOT TO TIE OFF HIS LEG.



JESUS, RICK.



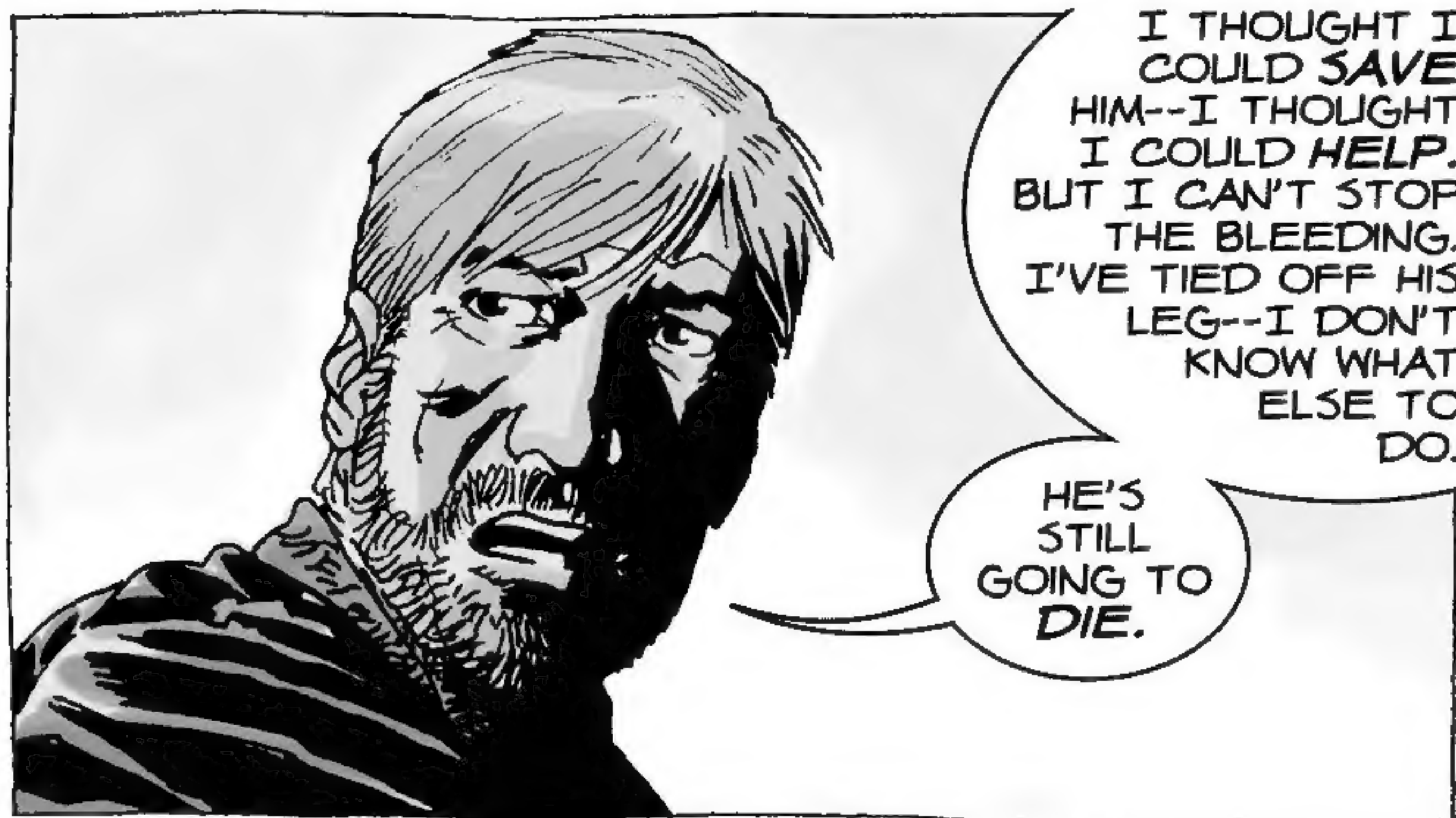
WILL YOU HOLD HIM DOWN SO I CAN DO THIS?!

HE'S GOING TO BLEED TO DEATH!



RICK-- I--

I THINK ALLEN HAS PASSED OUT AGAIN.





AXEL--
COME
HERE.



IT'S NOT
HORSEHAIR--
BUT IT'LL
DO.



THE
HELL?!



TYING OFF HIS LEG LIKE
THAT *HELPS* BUT IT'LL
ONLY SLOW THE BLEEDING
SO MUCH--I'VE GOT TO
TIE OFF HIS *ARTERIES*
UNTIL WE CAN FIND
SOMETHING TO CLOSE
IT UP MORE
PERMANENTLY.

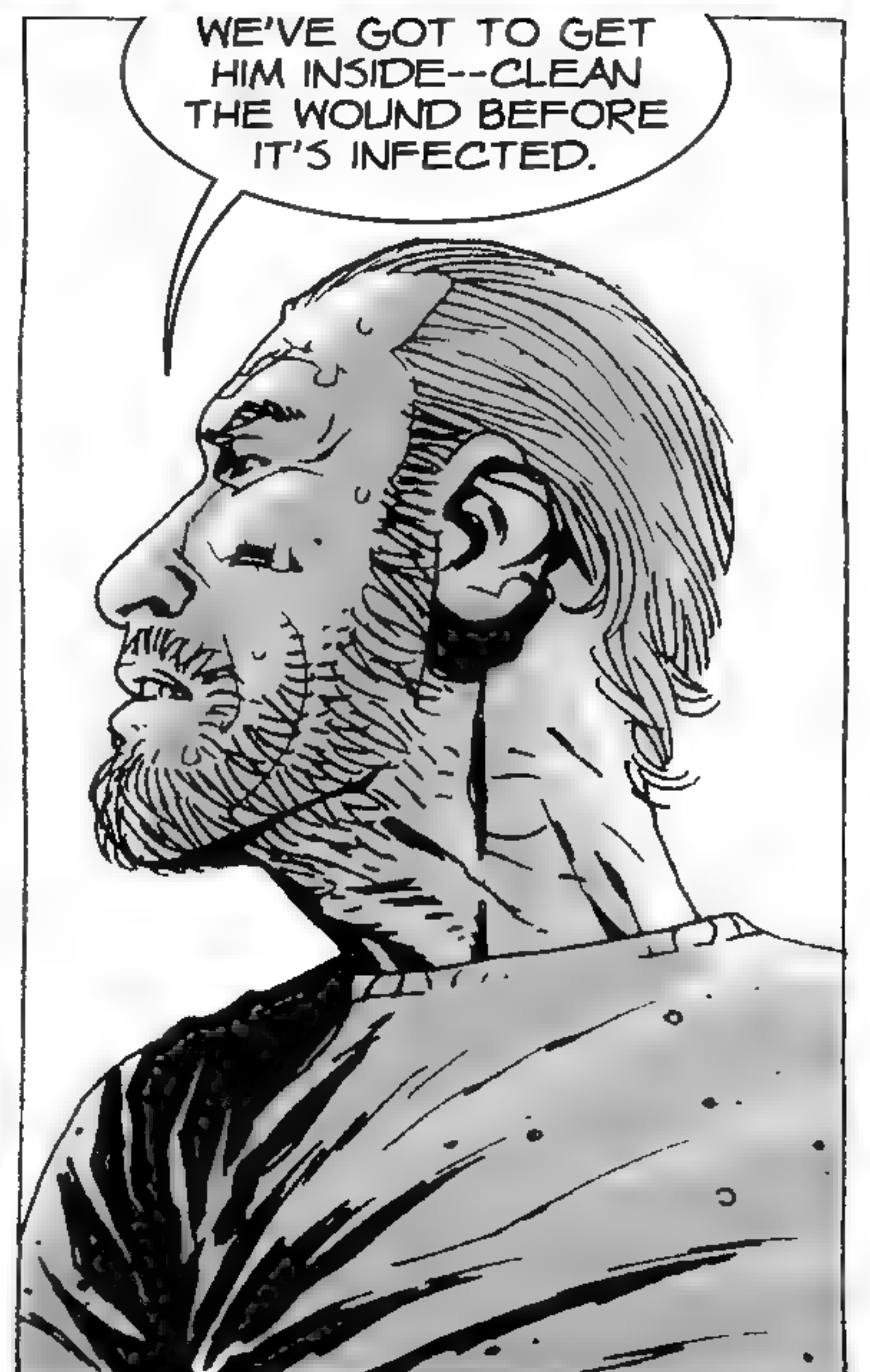
YOU HAD
THE RIGHT *IDEA*--
BUT YOU JUST
WEREN'T QUITE
THERE. IF HE
HASN'T LOST TOO
MUCH BLOOD--
HE MAY JUST
LIVE.



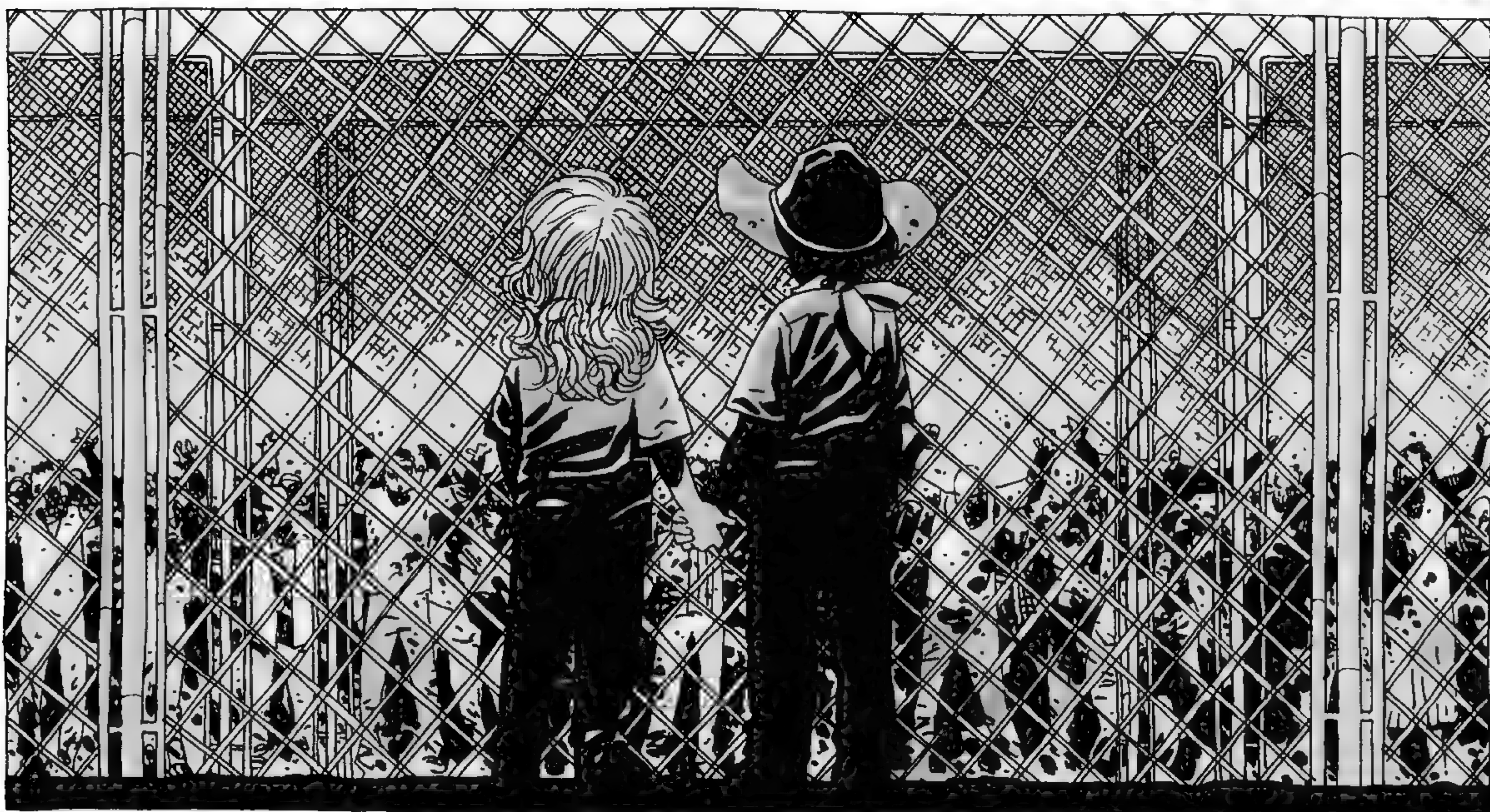
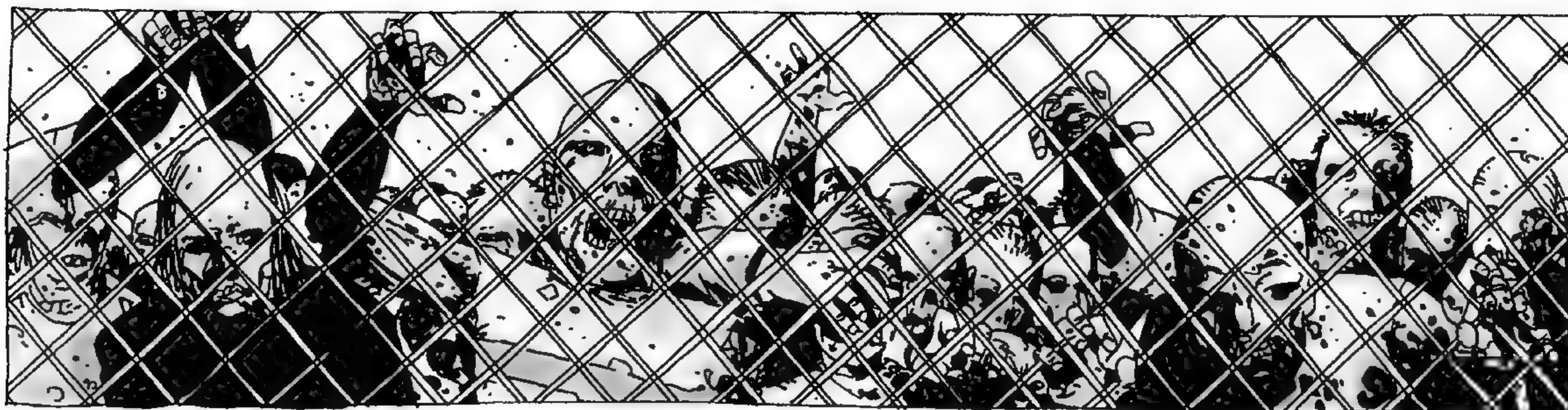
I'M USING AXEL'S
HAIR--IT'S COARSE
ENOUGH THAT IT
WON'T SLIDE OFF
BECAUSE OF
THE BLOOD.



IF I CAN STOP THE MOVEMENT
OF THE BLOOD--IT'LL COAGULATE
ENOUGH TO CLOSE THE ARTERY
A LITTLE ON IT'S OWN--OR AT
LEAST HELP HOLD THE HAIR ON
IT--WHICH WILL BE PINCHING
THE THING SHUT.



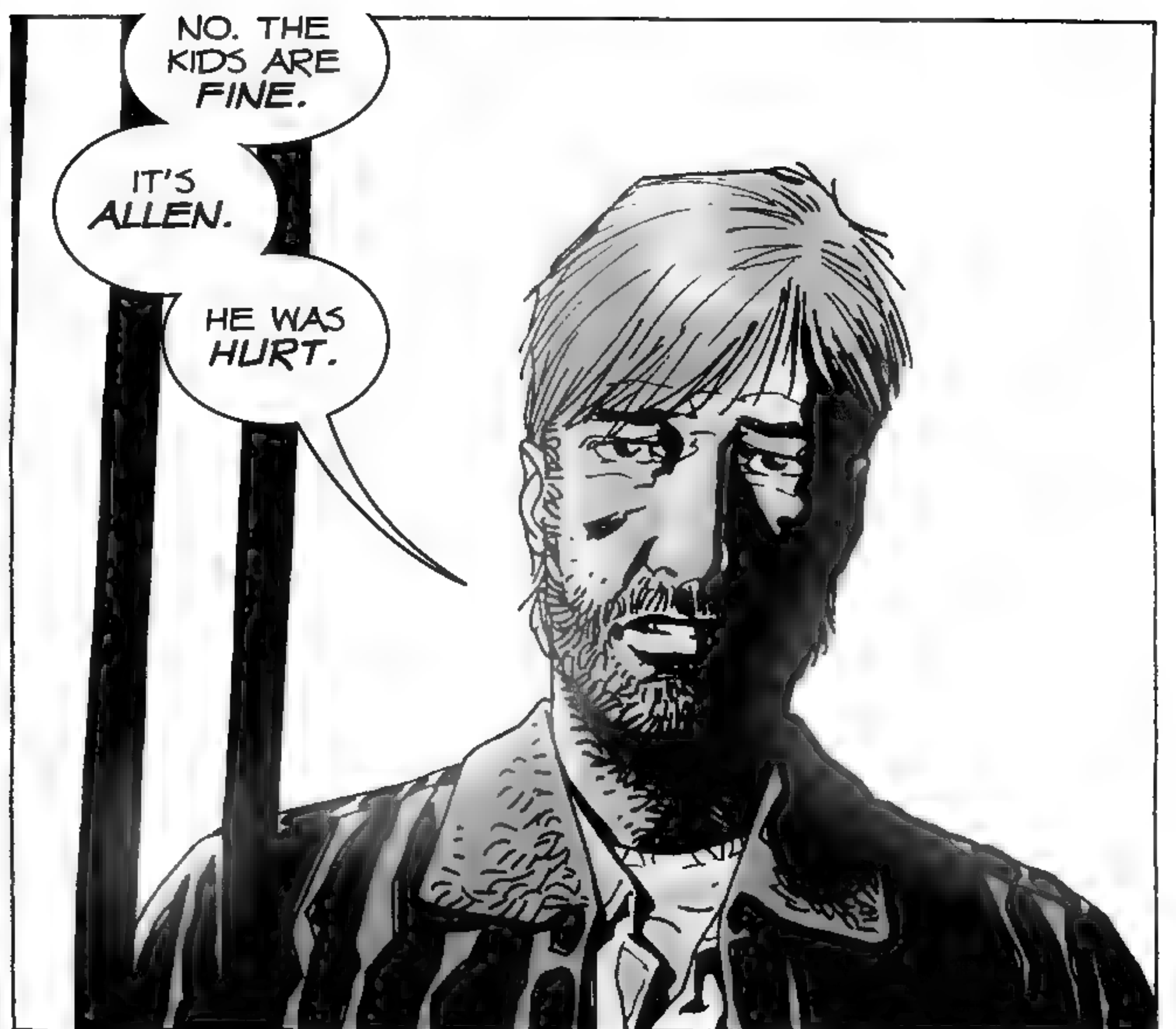
WE'VE GOT TO GET
HIM INSIDE--CLEAN
THE WOUND BEFORE
IT'S INFECTED.













YOU HANG IN THERE, ALLEN. YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY.

I PROMISE-- YOU'RE GOING TO GET THROUGH THIS.



I--I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE IT.

I'M GOING TO DIE.



DON'T SAY THAT. YOU'RE GOING TO BE FINE.

YOUR SONS ARE HERE-- THEY NEED YOU. YOU'RE GOING TO BE OKAY.



TAKE CARE OF MY BOYS. YOU AND DALE-- YOU TAKE CARE OF THEM LIKE THEY WERE YOUR OWN.

PLEASE.



I WON'T HAVE TO, ALLEN-- LISTEN TO ME.

IS HE OKAY? HOW IS HE DOING?



I--

...

HE'S IN AND OUT-- HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD.

WHAT HAPPENED?



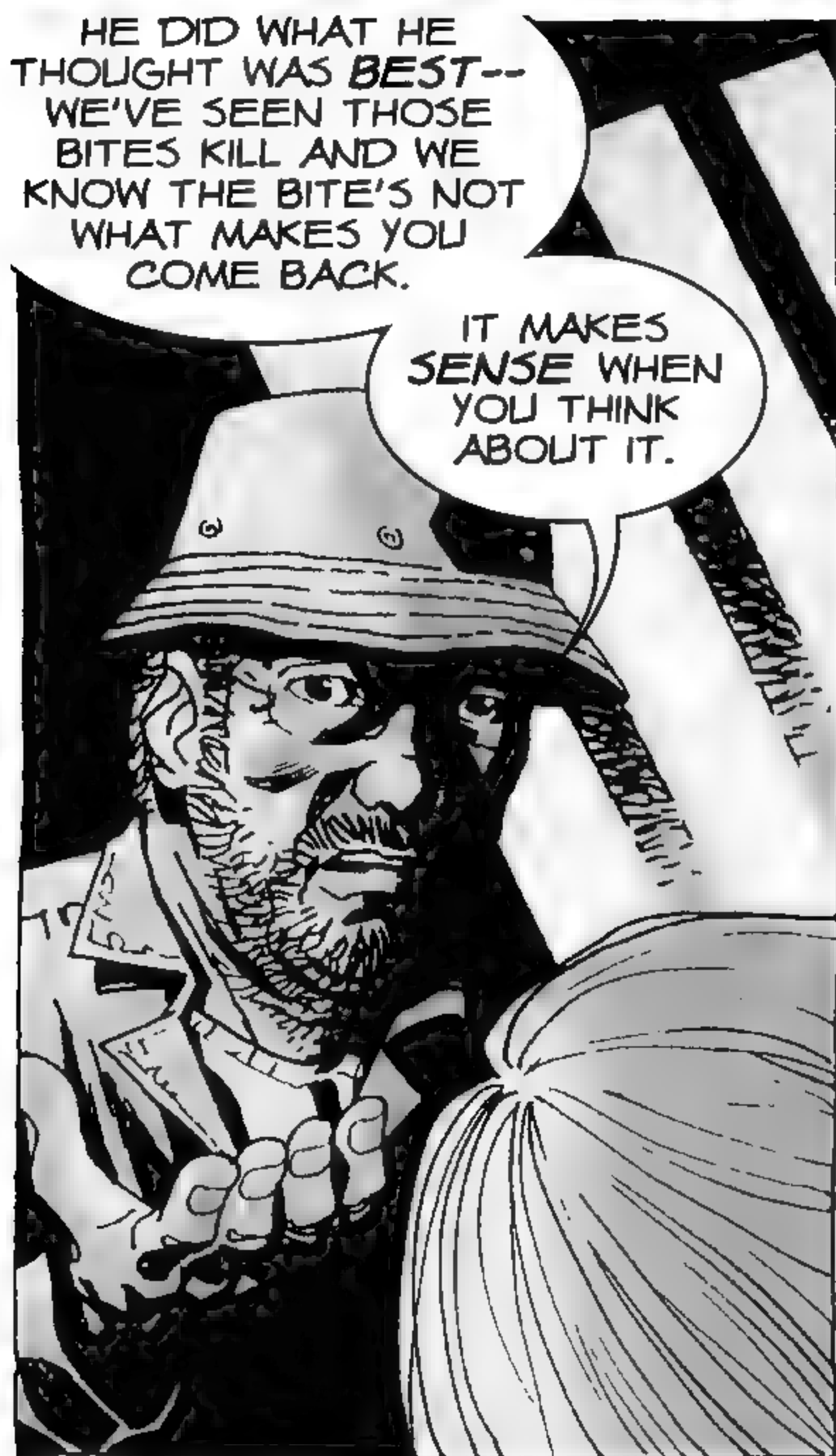
ALLEN WAS BITTEN--BUT RICK CUT HIS FOOT OFF HOPING IT WOULD STOP THE BITE FROM KILLING ALLEN.

HE WHAT?!



HE DID WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS **BEST**--WE'VE SEEN THOSE BITES KILL AND WE KNOW THE BITE'S NOT WHAT MAKES YOU COME BACK.

IT MAKES SENSE WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT IT.



HE DID IT **HIMSELF**?! HE JUST CUT OFF ALLEN'S **FOOT**?!

HE JUST CUT IT OFF?! **HOW**?!



HE DID WHAT HE THOUGHT WAS **BEST** AND ALLEN IS **FINE** FOR NOW. IT'S GOING TO BE OKAY.



WHERE IS **TYREESE**? WAS HE THERE?



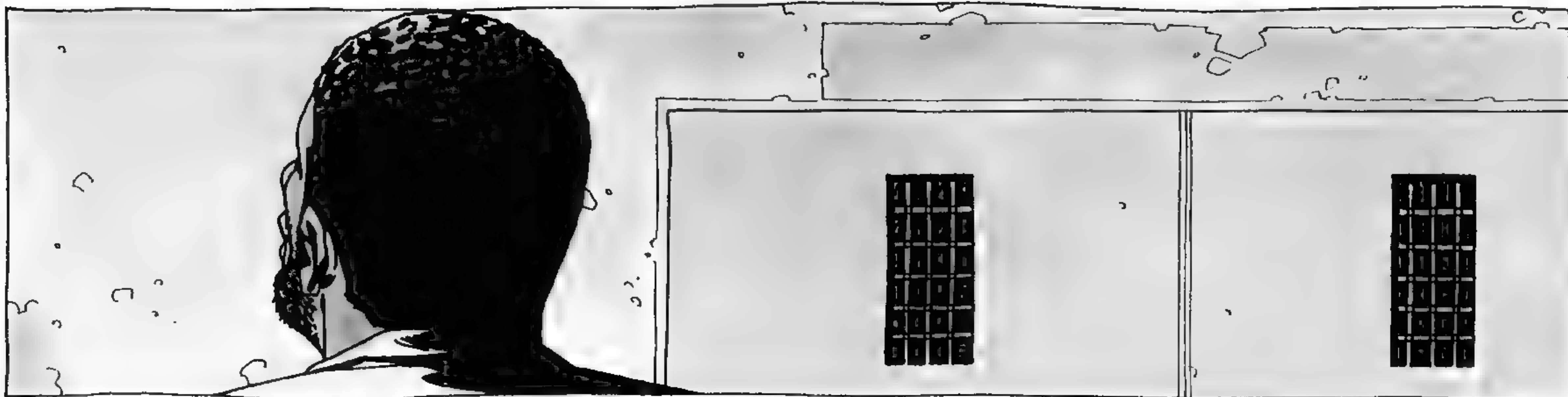
HE WAS THERE. HE HELPED US GET ALLEN INSIDE.



I THINK HE WENT TO THE GYM--TO BLOW OFF SOME STEAM. HIS WORDS.









I'M SO GLAD WE FOUND A PLACE WITH MANUAL LOCKS.

NO KIDDING, MAGGIE--THIS IS HEAVEN. I DON'T EVER WANT TO LEAVE.



SO DOES THAT MEAN YOU'RE READY FOR MORE?

I--WELL--NO. IS THAT OKAY? I'D LIKE TO-- BUT I DON'T KNOW IF I **CAN**. I THINK I'VE REACHED MY LIMIT FOR THE DAY--MAYBE THE WEEK.



YOU WANT TO JUST--**SNUGGLE** OR SOMETHING? GIRLS LIKE THAT, RIGHT? I CAN STILL DO THAT.



I GUESS WE CAN SNUGGLE-- IF THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT.

YOU BIG GIRL.

PLEASE--WE'VE BEEN IN HERE FOR **HOURS**. I DOUBT YOU COULD FIND SOMEONE ELSE WITH STAMINA LIKE ME--AND I'M JUST A LITTLE GUY.



I KNEW YOU WERE GOING TO RUN WITH THAT AND I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING IT IN THAT DIRECTION.

YOU'RE NOT "LITTLE."

DON'T SWEAT IT-- I KNOW HOW SENSITIVE YOU ARE ABOUT "LITTLE GLENN."





NO, I *LIKE* IT HERE--*REALLY*. THE PEOPLE ARE NICE. THERE ARE TRUST ISSUES, HAVING TO BE LOCKED IN MY CELL AT NIGHT, NOT HAVING MY WEAPONS BUT IT'S *UNDERSTAND-ABLE*.

EVERYONE HAS BEEN KIND TO ME--THERE'S A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF *DISTANCE* TO BE SURE, BUT AS I SAID, IT'S *JUSTIFIED*.

IT MAKES SENSE.



SOME HAVE WARMED UP TO ME MORE THAN *OTHERS*. BUT THIS ISN'T A POPULARITY CONTEST, THIS IS ABOUT *SURVIVAL*--I DON'T *CARE* IF THEY LIKE ME.

AND IF THE QUESTION IS "CAN YOU SURVIVE HERE?" THE ANSWER IS MOST-DEFINITELY YES.

I EVEN--



UH... MICHONNE?



YEAH-- ANDREA, RIGHT? WHAT DO YOU WANT?



WHO
EXACTLY
ARE YOU
TALKING
TO?

THERE'S
NOBODY
THERE.

THE WALKING DEAD

TM
ROBERT KIRKMAN
CHARLIE ADLARD
TONY MOORE

**Zombies
outside...**

**...conflict
inside!**

JULY
2005

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LETTER HACKS

WRITE TO US AT:

THE WALKING DEAD
C/O FUNK-O-TRON
P.O. BOX 54386
LEXINGTON, KY 40555-4386

OR

WALKINGDEAD@FUNKOTRON.COM

Well, check that out, issue 21. And not a day late--well, that's actually a true statement, we're not a day late... slightly more actually, but only slightly. Our scheduling problems as of late are due in part to a busy con season, but also... well, they're my fault. I've been taking a little bit more time on scripts than I should have and because of that, Charlie's been having trouble keeping up. So there, my fault. Sorry about that.

But don't worry, we'll get this thing back on track before you know it. I'm completely dedicated to this book. As much if not more so than I've ever been.

I do have to mention that one hiccup in what will soon be a two-year run ain't bad. So cut us some slack as we get things back on schedule. We'll love you for it.

Last issue in a preposterous letter that asked about the authenticity of a gun on a past cover I jokingly said that Tony Moore is a murderer. Some would argue that murder is not a joking matter and some would be correct. I was totally in the wrong and I accept full responsibility. So please, stop breaking Tony's windows, Tony Moore is NOT a murderer.

In the same response I also said that Charlie Adlard was ALSO a murderer, but it turns out that's a complement in the United Kingdom. Go figure.

In other news, that big hardcover I mentioned as shipping in November has been pushed back to December, but it'll be shipping in EARLY December so it's practically the same time. It'll be worth the wait though, just you wait and see.

Now, let's answer some of that mail you kids seem to like so much.

Hello Robert

When I first saw the cover for issue #19, I didn't know what to think. For a second I thought you were going to bring in super heroes, UFOs and sexy ninja woman for some reason.

But when I read the book my fears were laid to rest. Damn fine stuff as always. I have to admit I love how Rick is evolving as a character. Way backing issue #1 we saw him get a tear in his eye just for shooting a zombie.

But here, he blows Dexter away with a "Cry me a river." Rick has definitely changed over time. But is this a good or bad thing? Is he going to become a stronger leader? Or is he going over to the dark side so to speak where he pops anyone who stands against him?

Time will tell I guess. Great work. Glad to hear sales are still going up. I want this book around for a long time.

Peace,
Eric L. Busby

This book should be around for a good long time, so no worries there at the moment. Keep an eye on Rick, I think you'll be surprised where he's headed.

Hello again.

First a big thank you for printing my first letter in issue 18.

This new chick in TWD 19 kicks ass it would be a shame if she got killed too soon. It seems to be a growing trend, you introduce several characters, put focus on one and the rest are fodder but it is handled with genius.

The zombies are looking more gruesome, when Rick first woke and journeyed to Atlanta the zombies he encountered were freshly dead now they're uglier. A few years later with all the weather like snow, rain, heat, wind, they'd be naked and completely gross.

We'll get there, eventually.

I know you stated this series is zombie movie with the bits before and after the bit we see but every single issue is brilliant, if there were a TV show it would work better in a format like 24, maybe showing a hour of every day for a whole month, show what the characters are doing.

Dan

A TV show? That's a brilliant idea.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I think you do a great job handling the unruly people in your life, from your characters to your readers--that's my overly literary way of saying, "zombies good. Letters good."

Sometimes people write in and treat you like shit, and you take it a lot more graciously than I think I would if I were in your place. Another zombie-comic guru writes in to give you a "grade"? Clearly this guy has some kind of chip on his shoulder about being your elder or something. To your credit, you were nice to him, as you are to all of us who don't know how to act. I buy your book, I tell my friends to buy your book, I tell my students--especially my creative writing students--to buy your book: that's MY critique. Keeping up the good work in spite of the peanut gallery is just another testament to your wonderful talent and savvy.

You make a good point, but where would I be without the peanut gallery? They can critique my work all day and all night as long as they're paying the price of admission. It's all part of the process.

I like the political notes that the book has been hitting lately--I was really struck when Rick asked for the Mysterious Stranger's sword at the end of #19 and then locked her up. Wow! Talk about your safety-versus-security metaphor! And you just sort of waltz from there right to the more humanistic moment between Rick and Tyrese about the "code of justice" Rick cooked up a while back. I know this sort of talk probably makes you nervous, but you're starting to blaze trails that even Romero left alone... man, I just love the way you work a theme from two different sides, and keep the characters from noticing until it's too late.

Thanks.

I just... I can't believe he used the word "grade"!? What the hell!? As though you were sitting around, sweating bullets, the whole time... "Man, the numbers are good, people seem to like it, but what does RALPH GRIFFITH think? He won't return my calls..."

Sweet zombie Jesus.
--Will Bush (No relation)

I see exactly what you mean. Screw Ralph Griffith.

Robert,

Big fan of The Walking Dead. #19 was another good one -- I can't believe Rick turned the gun on Dexter. That's pure cold-blooded. He's going down quite the dark path, isn't he? And how exactly do you TAME a zombie? Guess you can teach a dead dog (so to speak) new tricks.

About your conversion to the Blockbuster DVD system: NOOOO!! Don't support the Evil Empire! You're crazy if you don't go for Netflix. From all reports, Netflix has got a much quicker turnaround (I've been hearing about all kinds of delays through Blockbuster), better selection, WAY better customer service, and, best of all, they aren't owned by a baseball-ruining, faux "family values" lunatic, whose rental stores refuse to carry NC-17 or unrated titles, and which routinely censor videos with no warning labels on the boxes to indicate so (the versions of John Woo's The Killer and Peter Jackson's Dead Alive they carry are laughable, and Bad Lieutenant? Merely a Somewhat Naughty Lieutenant, if you rent it at Blockbuster).

I have never had a Netflix account so I can't really comment on their service. I will say that from my experience Blockbuster hasn't had any delays. I've rarely waited more than two days since the return of a movie before I get my next one. Also, on the NC-17 thing, I don't know how the actual stores are, but the online version of Blockbuster DOES rent NC-17 movies and UNRATED movies. So there. Now, let's talk about some zombies, kay?

Had to get that out of my system.

Don't sweat it.

I appreciated the cast pages last issue, but again this issue I found myself looking at a couple of characters and thinking, "Now, who is that guy again?" Since you're not running an ad on the inside front cover anyway, you might want to think about running an

abbreviated list of characters there every issue. It sure would help this fella out. My brain, she don't remember names and faces so well anymore, especially with a month downtime between seeing those names and faces.

We're running the character pages every issue now. See?

Speaking of brains (here we go)... I thought you might want to check out my new website, *Zombie Eat Brains*: <http://hungryzombie.blogspot.com/>

I'll see if I can get around to checking that out. In the meantime, enjoy the plug.

All the horror blogs out there, not to mention your fine comic, are presented from the point of view of the surviving humans. But who speaks for the poor zombie? The poor, mindless, ravenous, brain-eating zombie? Well, now I do!

It's very funny. So I've been told. And if you don't like it, what is it, like, two minutes out of your life? Come on! (Start from the oldest entry.)

It's been up and running less than a week now (I backdated a bunch of entries to have a generous backlog of content for new visitors), and a mention in your letters column sure would help get the word out about it. And if you don't wanna, then I guess you delete my email, I never hear back from you, no harm done. I promise I won't stop buying your comic. (Maybe.)

Thanks,
Tom Collins

Okay, enough about the damn website--let's get back to the subject at hand--THIS BOOK. Oh, your letter is already over. Damn.

Kirkman and co:

This. Book. Kicks. ASS!!

Most books that my local comic store (Dragon's Tale in Neptune Beach!) tends to recommend are super-hero centric. So I was a bit suprised by all these things I was hearing about a freaking zombie book. Now I've always loved zombie movies, but I'd never read a comic about the fuckers that grabbed my interest. Until TWD, that is. I was content to flip through an issue here or there at the beginning, but I was too busy buying the same old crap from Marvel and DC that I had been reading for years. Anyways, you know the story. I wised up, dropped a bunch of dead-weight books, and dove head-first into TWD, beginning with the first two trades, and then the single issues.

It's good to have you.

Now that all of that is out of the way, I have one thing to say about you, Robert. YOU'RE A SICK BASTARD! I thought for sure the only characters that were safe in this book were Carl, Sophia, and Herschel's twins. Shows what I know. OK, so if even little kids are expendable, I ask you this: is there ANYONE in this book that you consider "safe"? Even if you don't want to say who it is, I'm just curious. I'd go with Herschel. After all, how much horrifying shit can happen to one guy?

Well, nobody is safe. There are times where a character like Hershel might get a pass based on all this shit I've already put him through but that's it. There are no characters I've sat down at said "I'm never killing that guy" about. Now I DO have long running plans for a few characters so they're safe for a while--but I've already changed my mind on a couple long running characters already--like Donna.

Here's hoping this book continues for over 100 issues, or at least ends with an issue of two pages of people dying and twenty pages of zombies standing around. Or aliens!

Keep it up, you sick, sick man.
Chris Carroll

Man, when we get to the last issue (however long that takes) I'm TOTALLY doing that death on pages 1 and 2 and 20 pages of zombies thing. That's so totally awesome. Don't worry, none of you will be reading the book then. We'll be two years past aliens by that point.

Thanks again for another great issue, Deadmen. For a while, I thought I might be reading the wrong book, what with whole pages having no word bubble and all. Yet, despite all the action, we still get some great characterization with the highlight of course being Rick taking out Dexter. That moment reminded me of so many other comics, movies, and shows where I thought someone needed to take advantage of a situation to eliminate a threat, but the never do. I was very glad to see Rick actually do something to end the problem they were having with Dex when he got the opportunity. Rick's really starting to take control and handle problems the way he wants to regardless of what others will think. I can see this forming a rift among the clan in the prison with Rick leading one group and maybe Lori leading a more pacifist group.

What I didn't understand in this issue is how Dex could get into the armory and back out without seeing any of the zombies that ended up attacking everyone. He'd have to run into some of them on his way to or from the armory, so he'd want to make sure he locked it up when he left. I guess it worked well for the story, so I shouldn't complain, but it seemed a little unbelievable to me (although I don't seem to have a problem accepting the fact that the world is full of zombies).

Well, Dexter did know the prison really well. So he was able to get to the armory with little to no resistance. Personally I think Tyreese killing all those zombies in the gym is a little more unbelievable but if you want to latch on this one, more power to you.

The new girl in the camp is already very interesting. I can't wait to find out where she came from and what she's been doing since the zombie plague began. Has she been alone all along, or is she the sole survivor of a larger group? How will she feel being part of this new group where Rick is always in charge? She seems like a dominant personality, so I wouldn't be surprised to see a power struggle between her and Rick. I also can't imagine that she'll appreciate being

treated like a prisoner for very long. Her arrival just opens up so many great possibilities, that I can't wait to see how it plays out.

The cover for your next issue looks very interesting as well. I know Rick and Lori have been growing apart, but I didn't expect them

to split already (at least it appears that is what is going to happen based on the cover). What could happen in the next issue that causes such an abrupt separation? Does Lori somehow find out what Rick did to Dex and not appreciate Rick "taking the law into his own hands?" I'm not sure how she would find out, so it seems like it must be something else... I really can't think of what, but I can't wait to find out! I don't think I've ever looked forward to each issue of a book in my life. You're just doing a tremendous job here!

Now, get to work on some posters for us! I've already got spots picked out on my wall to put up a few, so quit making us wait!

Thanks for all your great work!
Jim Amato

Posters huh? I'll have to look into that.

This is the first letter I've ever written to a comic, honestly. Could it be possible that #19 was the darkest issue yet? I think so. I really didn't expect Rick to murder the nutty prisoner, and I had to go back and re-read those pages it was such a shock. Nice work all around, chaps. It's certainly the best zombie comic book I've ever read.

Oh, when are you going to do a Walking Dead/Jack Staff crossover?

kelvin green

I have to do Invincible/Jack Staff first.

Mr. Kirkman and Letter Hacks,

I have recently returned to reading comic books after an eleven-year break. To be frank, I was pretty much looking for some bathroom reading material a few months ago when I stumbled upon my comic book collection from when I was ten years old. After rereading the Death of Superman and Maximum Carnage story arcs for the first time in eleven years, I decided comics were good reading material (and trust me, I mean this as a compliment) for the crapper.

I went to a local comic store, looking to update my comic library, and I picked up some of the current mainstream titles. I have to say, I was pretty impressed. I wasn't completely blown away by any of these titles, but I was satisfied with their quality and figured they were about as good as comics could get. That was until I picked up The Walking Dead.

I had glanced at an article about your book on the "comics" page of the IGN website, in which they claimed that this is the best Zombie book on the market. A huge Romero fan myself, I picked up the first two trade paperback volumes to give the series a try. I finished those two books in one sitting. I quickly went out the next day to pick up the third volume and issue #19, I couldn't get enough.

As a Romero fan, this is exactly what I have been looking for: Character-driven Zombie literature. I do not use the term "literature" loosely. This is more than just your average comic, it is art.

The characters are brilliant; you have done a great job at developing them into believable people. You are able to fully utilize every member of your cast, and if there is a character that is just taking up space for one reason or another, you know exactly the right time to kill them off. Brilliant!

What I like the best about this book, especially as it progresses, are the moral "shades of grey" (which match the artwork!) that emerge. It is fitting that a black and white rule such as "you kill, you die" has been cast aside about as quickly as that bullet which passed through Dexter's head. The moral struggles keep this work extremely interesting.

Well that is all that I have to say. This is my first time writing to a comic because, well, I was ten years old the last time I was reading comics. I just want to express my appreciation for all of the excellent work. Oh, and so you know, I hold my TWD collection in such high regard; it has gone nowhere near my bathroom. It's just that good.

From a devoted TWD fan,
Brad Dean

Thanks. But y'know... I think comics are MEANT for the bathroom. So please, don't deny your copies of The Walking Dead the joy of sitting through a good poop with you. When you do that, you deny them their reason for existing. That's like not allowing a lion to eat antelope or whatever or not allowing Tony Moore to terrorize things. Y'know, since he's a terrorist and all.

Dear Kirkman,

After the events of issue 18, I didn't know how you were going to write your way out of that situation. But you pulled it off with the age-old method of throwing zombies at the problem.

See, you guys are starting to catch onto the formula.

The first draft of this letter was all about Land of the Dead, which should be out by the time this letter is printed. (That's pretty presumptuous isn't it--who says I'm going to print this letter?) Needless to say, damn it'll be great. This should be another good year for zombie flicks (aside from Romero's masterpiece). Movies like Risen, Undead, House of the Dead 2, Silent Hill (are there zombies in that?), The Day of the Living Dead: The Curse of the Maya (ok, maybe not that one...), Return of the Living Dead IV and V (err...), Worst Case Scenario (is this out?), and Zombies (but Hooper's movie may be out next year).

I like the idea of the mysterious woman's zombie guards. Our group should employ some. Maybe form a little contingent of zombies, like the whole Manchurian incident in 1942. Seriously, Max Brooks is brilliant.

Maybe I SHOULD read that book...

1. Will we be seeing the zombies "getting smarter" soon?

Nope.

2.
I asked this in Invincible, but
could you fantasy cast your ideal TWD movie? Come on, Simon Pegg
as Rick!

You think he could play Rick? Really? He's a fantastic actor... but Rick? I mean,
Nick Frost MAYBE but not Simon. ;-)

3. Can we see more of Sleepwalker!? Please! (ok sorry, wrong book, but I've
already been printed there once...)

THROK!,
Chris Pitts

Sleepwalker is in Team-Up 9 and 10 and will be returning for the "LEAGUE OF
LOSERS" story arc that will be running from issues 15-18. You're in LUCK! I love
that guy!

Hey Robert--

I got issue 19 last week (loved it... duh), and realized that I'm still thinking about
issue 18 so I figured I'd write. I just wanted to tell you how much I loved the split
between what the cover was promising and what actually went down. I know, it
wasn't planned... but boy did it make the whole thing feel alive and dangerous. I
(like you, apparently) had been waiting since the end of the previous issue for a
hanging, and then shit just started spinning out of control. I guess what I'm saying
is, thanks for letting the characters take the lead and doing what's ultimately best
for the comic.

Yeah, it sure was fun, but I'll be damned if it didn't make writing 19, 20, and this
issue a pain in the ass. I mean... I had to change my entire plan.

Now that I'm writing, let me make a few more comments. Issue 19. Right-
fucking-on. I'm pretty much up for whatever; I'm feeling really well taken care of
by your storytelling. So when you slow it down for a couple of issues, I'm digging
it. Now, you're throwing a kick-ass babe with a sword into the mix, well that's
fuckin' fun as hell. Can't wait to see how she develops. And the closing note
between the guys discussing the practical and moral implications of murder -- I
mean, this is what it would get to if you were in a situation like this, right? The
Walking Dead continues to be a deeply satisfying ride.

I'd also like to add my two cents to something Corby Daniel brings up in
LetterHacks, about the resurgence of horror being a reflection of the times. I
totally agree, the uncertainty of the times, both in our ability to make do in our
everyday lives and abroad, draw us to scenes of horror, both as distraction and
catharsis. By getting close to a scary situation that is controllable (you can always
leave the theater, shut off the TV, close the book) we feel some small mastery
over the fears we have every day about survival. But within that larger genre
of horror, it is also no coincidence that zombies have returned. I don't think it's
simply that 28 Days Later was popular and now is being copied (that's not aimed
at you, Kirkman). (better not be) Zombies resonate potently with the specific fears
of our times. They are in the zeitgeist for a reason, and they've been coming for a
while. Specific monsters relate, or resonate, specifically to different kinds of fears.
I'm not sure if a close reading of history bears this theory out, but you have body
snatchers and space aliens in the Fifties, during the fear of communisim, and now
we are being overrun by zombies. Clive Barker has this to say on the subject:

Zombies are the liberal nightmare. Here you have the masses, whom you would
love to love, appearing at your front door with their faces falling off; and you're
trying to be as humane as you possibly can, but they are, after all, eating the cat.
And the fear of mass activity, of mindlessness on a national scale, underlies [the]
fear of zombies.

We live in zombie times. Fear of the mob, of the other, of the "rest of the world"
(or of the red/blue states) losing their goddamn minds and pulling the few among
us left living sane lives -- pulling us from all sides into the pit of madness -- goes to
the core for us right now. As the nation continues to polarize, and the "other side"
is seen as increasingly dangerous and difficult to understand (from either side), a
world in which humanity itself dies only to rise up and tear the flesh from our very
limbs seems less like fantasy and more like allegory.

Not to say that zombies can have only one meaning. Interestingly, in the UK, when
fear of mad cow disease was rampant, the film Dead Creatures seemed to quietly
address itself to that particular concern, not from the more common point of view
of fear of the external, but from an internalized POV -- fear of the self. Cool little
movie. Tweaks the Pittsburgh conventions in a fun way.

Couple of random parting shots... I've been seeing the TPBs at the top of
Amazon's horror graphic novel best-seller list. All three of them, right at the top,
one-two-three (or, technically, three-one-two). That's great news (for all of us).
Congratulations. Here's to TPBs number seven, eight, nine, and ten!

They're on the way, to be sure.

And about the poster... would it be a Tony Moore poster or a Charlie Adlard poster?
Talk about a toughie. My vote is for one of each. I know, some kind of crass,
economic science of diminishing returns will probably get in the way of my dream:
Tony's cover to issue 9, with Rick reflected in a zombie's eye, in full-ass color, and
a Charlie-drawn poster, more overtly depicting zombies, in black and white, maybe
with some color in the text. With dreams as specific as these, it's hard for them
not to get dashed. But I, for one, would pony up for one of each (support!).

Oh, hey, and about MTU. It's like hanging out at your pal's day job. I always
feel like whispering to someone, "Psst, I know this guy... I know what he's really
into..." Love the light tone. Keep it up. And more Moon Knight! The title should
be MTUWMK.

Heh, actually, I think THIS book is the stretch. MTU is what I'm REALLY like: silly,
fun, retarded.

It really just keeps getting better and better (talking about TWD now...), and I
can't wait to see where we're headed next.

Take care, man,
Andrew Garcia-Price

Thanks for the kind words, and the Clive Barker quote. That's a good one, thanks
for sharing.

Dear Letter Hacks,

Finally someone realizes the joy of

killing characters
in comics. There are no actors to deal
with, no need to hire new people to replace them. I don't understand why every
comic doesn't see the light. I'd kill off X-men every day and never bring 'em back.
So many other comics live in fear of losing their fan base by killing off some super
hero that a bunch of people like. Screw that shit. Comics are a great medium of
story telling because the only boundary is the writer and the artist's imagination...
And drawing ability, I guess. If I had a comic, it would be a bunch of crappy stick
figures with chainsaws. I just finished #19 and thought it was the most interesting
yet. I like the whole prison scene so far. The introduction of the new sword-
wielding woman was great! Zombie pets are a good idea. Just cut off all the parts
that could hurt you and lead them around to keep the other zombies at bay. I
hope to see a scene where every character has a pet zombie.

Tyreese is my favorite character. He seems to know that they're all fucked
anyway, so he might as well make the best of it. Rick is a good main character,
but he's a cop, and I don't trust or like cops as a general rule. Cops need order,
their job is to keep everything in the green. But this whole zombie situation is
going to need people that live in the red. Rick can't keep everybody civilized. He
can't even keep himself civilized, even though he's trying. What I really dig about
your book so far is that people don't have to be bitten by a zombie to become
one. Hell yeah! That's some scary shit, knowin' that you could die of the flu and
then get up and start eating folks. There are a lot of bald zombies, but the hair
would probably be some the first bits to go as you walk around for miles rotting
away. My wallet thanks you for the cheaper trades. I can hardly pay for food
sometimes, let alone a \$25 dollar trade paperback. Keep up the killing and I'll be
there to read about it.

-Zach Michealis

Yeah, a lot of people talk about our cheap \$10 volume 1 TPB but even the other
volumes at \$13 are super cheap for a six issue TPB. Most trades containing six
issues are \$16 to \$19. We're doing our best to give back to the fans in every way
we can. We're cool like that.

Dear Robert

The newest arrival to the cast of The Walking Dead is a strutting package of
cool. Perhaps a bit too much. Urban. Dressed to impress. Dreadlock hairdo.
She even handles a katana, the samurai long sword. Definitely a hip thing.
She also has that cold "don't f@ck with me" attitude. Is she a former lawyer? She
also carries something valuable. New data. By removing the lower jaw and the
arms, she rendered her "escorts" harmless. A sort of zombie neutering. She was
also able to roam among "roamers" with relative comfort. Hmm...

Rick's cold-blooded murder of Dexter was logical but kind of hard to take. Now
that he is in a secure setting he must wrap his head around rules and a work
agenda. Otherwise, he'll continue down the road to insanity.

Nice to see Otis again.

I love TWD. I love Charlie's artwork, and I love it in B, W and grays. BUT each
time I see a Tony Moore cover, I feel a need to see a full color Dead long story.
Be it an annual or a graphic novel.

Nah. Color would just wreck things.

The Land of the Dead trailer looks great, doesn't it? Hope it does real well so
Romero will get the financial legs, so we won't have to wait so long
between movies.

Keep up the great work

Victor Rosario Fermaint.

Yeah, I think the single best thing that came out of Land of the Dead was the
possibility of MORE Romero zombie flicks. If he doesn't do at least ONE more
sequel I'm going to be very disappointed.

Dear Letter hacks (the best letters page...ever),

I've been following this book and Mr. Kirkman sense I read the 2099 relaunch -
I have gone back and bought the wholes set - This is the only non-Marvel book
I get

WOW--really? The 2099 books are what got you into my work? REALLY?!
Heh. That's pretty cool. Welcome aboard. You should try INVINCIBLE,
though--if you like the Marvel stuff.

I've just read issue 19 - I must admint I was weary of the cover - a woman
with 2 zombies in tow makes sense in the walking dead universe - but just
looks a bit too "out there". Anyway after reading this looks to be a great arc - I
thought they would have to move on from the prison but no Rick killed Dex -
This was a big surprise for me. As for the ending - yeah its about time the "You
kill you die" was addressed. I mean Tyreese killed his daughters boyfriend,
nothing was said will this be detailed later?

Well, yeah. Of course.

Anyway time for my fave zombie movies:

- 1 - Dawn of the dead original
- 2 - Night of the living dead original
- 3 - Dead alive/Breaddead - the energy of the film is insane

Ok now I have a couple of questions:

1 - what do you think would happen if this happened in the Marvel universe?
Personally I believe there wouldn't be many heroes left. Who would you pick
as survivors? I'd have to pick Punisher (for his survival instinct) and Cage
(unbreakable skin). Who would you think would be left?

I've been thinking about this a lot lately, actually...

2 - I hope you never get bored with this book - I could see this becoming
Rick's son's book once Rick passes on.

3 - If Romero was to offer to make a movie/TV show of TWD would you be interested?
Why? You got his number?
4 - Would you ever let anyone else write this book?
No.
Anyway I've taken a ton of your time.
I hope to god you print this.
Thanks for the great books.
Craig "Buhbuhrayspidey" Lowrey
Thanks to that "GOD" guy... I'm printing your letter. Make sure you thank him.
Kirkman,
Do you remember the days when whole issues would pass without anyone being killed? I know your just doing this to piss me off, I'm that important to you.
Those days will be here again. Nobody died in this issue right?
That said I'm not sorry to see Dexter go. The cast is having enough trouble building a safe haven without him walking around all twitchy and dangerous. I'm a little afraid that Andrew got away and I fear that he will bring more trouble to Rick and the gang in days to come.
Love the new woman. I think she'll be a great asset to the team. Her Idea of using "declawed" zombies to move freely on the outside is pure genius. I hope to see other creative uses for the dead in the future. Her use of a sword also shows good judgement. With the tools available to them the others could probably fashion swords as well, or some sword like weapons that will be more effective in killing the dead.
I'm concerned about Rick. First he tried to kill a man with his bare hands, and then killed ol' Dexter. The risk is that he's started down a long slippery slope. A problem with soldiers who have seen a lot of close quarters combat is that killing becomes to easy for them. This gets them into trouble when they have to deal with civilized society again. Rick went from fighting side by side with Dexter to killing him in a second. There wasn't much thought between opportunity and action and even afterwards he didn't seem overly upset and I think even Rick fears how easy it was.
I normally don't comment on letters in Letter Hacks but I have to say something about Ralph Griffith's critique or the art in Walking Dead. A C+/B-? Is he reading the brail version of the book? I personally couldn't imagine the art being any better (Page 8, issue 19 was particularly good). Griffith's just being pissy because he put out a book that nobody's ever heard of so he has to find something to criticize about Walking Dead. C+...
Yeah--fuck that guy!! Heh.
I can't wait to see what happens next, keep up the good work, fuck you for killing those little girls, and glad to hear that the book keeps selling better and better.
Not as happy as we are, I'll bet.
Ken Lindgren
Rochester, MN
P.S. I've got a Marvel Team Up Question. Now I know in your run on the book you've often had more than two hero's team up in the book, or at least had two teams of two heroes meet up help take down the bad guys. But when the previews come out there are never more than two heroes (or one hero and one super-team) advertised for the book. Is this just tradition? Could there be an MTU where Cadaver, Maverick, and Turbo (can anyone think of three lamer heros?) all team up, or are you contractually obligated to keep the number at two?
It's just easier for the artist to draw two characters instead of more. The covers for 11 and 13 feature a group of characters. You happy now?
Dear Robert et al,
Well, if I'm going to read these lengthy letters pages I might as well try and get into one of them.
#19 was the most exciting comic that came out that week, and in a market where Grant Morrison is writing five titles at once that's pretty remarkable work. Could it be that, now Rick has crossed some line by shooting Dexter, he's going to snap out of this delusion he's been slipping into? Ever since they found the prison, Rick's been kidding himself that he can rebuild civilization single-handedly, that he can apply all the old rules to a new situation. This mania seemed to peak with his planned 'execution' of Thomas, where Rick seemed to think that, if he dressed it up as an official killing, it would be any better than just shooting the mad bastard.
Blowing Dexter away seems to have brought the new situation home. For now, there's only one rule - see threat, eliminate threat. But what constitutes a threat? They're already locking up any 'strangers' over night, but how do we know the regulars are any less likely to go over the edge, especially after all they've lost? What do they do to people who take too much food, or leave the wrong gate open - both actions that could endanger the wider group?
The arrival of ninja girl in #19 might help to bring Rick, and the dopier members of the group, back to their senses. She seems to have adapted to the situation in a pragmatic but ruthless way (love the way she decapitates her pet zombies with one swipe once they've served their purpose), but does

anyone else want to end up the badass she seems to have become?
Congratulations on the Eisner noms. As someone who came to the book *because* of Charlie Adlard (I've been a fan since his 'X-Files' and 'Doctor Who Yearbook' days), it's a pleasure to see him get recognition. Tony's covers are pretty special as well, and well worth the attention. Here's hoping for a writing nod next year, huh? (yeah, no shit) It can only be a matter of time. Although, knowing how slow these award things can be, you'll probably win it after the aliens have been introduced and the book has gone to hell.
Until that happy day, this remains my favourite comic.
Cheers,
Mark Clapham
Thanks.
Hi Robert, Charlie, Cliff & Tony
Just thought you (& other George A. Romero/Simon Pegg fans) might be interested to know , that George A. Romero was so impressed by "Shaun of the Dead" (according to my daily paper), that he gave Simon Pegg & Edgar Wright (his mate in both Spaced & Shaun) cameos in "Land of the Dead". Neat, huh?!

You didn't disappoint with the women with sword & 2 chained zombies episode BTW - very good, though I thought she might have been loathe to give up her weapon so quickly.
Dude, she just wanted into the safe place. There's not much she wouldn't have done.
Anyway, can't wait for the next issue (& even more so for #25!). The great thing about The Walking Dead being occasionally late is the surprise I get when the comic shop lady, Debbie hands me the latest copy when I walk through the door. My other fave title (apart from the Bendis/Maleev run on DD) is "Strangehaven" which comes out twice a year if you're lucky, but usually just once! Well worth waiting for as is TWD.
That's one way of looking at it.
And before I go, I got a little stack of back issues today through the post of DH Zombie World. Haven't read them yet...you heard of these? Take care & just keep on doing what you do best!
Jeff
Heard of Zombie World? I wrote the introduction to the new Trade Paperback coming from Dark Horse.
I'll have to say that you have an excellent book all the way around. I'm in the intermediate stages of producing a comic book. Id like to know who designed your 'Walking Dead' cover logo. Thanks, keep up the good work.
Dave
The Walking Dead logo was designed by Brett Evan's, Image's director of production. He's also designed the logos for Invincible, Tech Jacket, Capes, Cloudfall, and Brit.
This right here is my first official letter to any comic and I felt you guy deserve it the most. I remember seeing The Walking Dead #1 and picking it up flipping thru the pages and loving every min of it. I only read three comics yours, a certain group of reality hoppers, and a man who loves to use his boom stick (ok that sounded kinda gross). I love the story and the cover art (that's what attracted me to the comic in the first place. Well keep up the good work.
Shane
p.s. Please put this on Letter Hacks!!!
OK!!!
Dear Walking Dead:
The Walking Dead #18 made me prepared for the upcoming George Romero movie Land of the Dead! Seeing our heroes behind the prison gate as the zombies rip flesh apart and entrails flying all over, leaves a dark mark on the mind. These zombies are always in a feeding frenzy, they are savage beyond any known reason. The living needs to stay focus and fight these monsters, but when they fight amongst themselves and decide to separate is the worst mistake ever. Divided they will truly fall. What the hell are they doing? Those echoing words...get the fuck out of my house, gave me the shivers! I see bad things on the horizon, very bad things. I just wonder why Michael Jackson isn't part of the undead, the man looks like a walking corpse, whiter than any zombie, has falling body parts (such as his nose), I mean isn't Michael Jackson a zombie? Think about putting Michael in the story, food for thought. I can now see Michael and a group of zombies doing a line dance to the song "Thriller"....whreeeeee heeeeeeee, heeeeeeee!
Sincerely yours,
Paul Dale Roberts
Michael Jackson appears in the background of almost every issue, dude. Pay attention.
Hey there, Mr. Kirkman--
You mentioned googling zombie toothpaste, the strangest zombie product you know... piqued my interest, but I couldn't find the durned thing. Was this a real product, or ineffective facetiousness? Seriously, I can't stop my zombies' teeth from falling out. (Or their eyes, arms, etc.).
By the way, any thoughts on Romero's upcoming movie? I'm psyched, but I'm afraid it might suck. Won't hurt your business, though, I'm sure. Peace.
Mered Parnes
You're obviously just not looking hard enough. Try again.
Let me start off by saying that I simply

love the book. It is an utter light at the end of the tunnel for us major zombie fanatics! Zombies just don't get their dues in movies and especially comic books. Deadworld made absolutely no sense. Land of the Dead really blew chunks too (utter disappointment considering Romero was attached). I've seen so many "zombie" serials which actually just suck harder than Jim Neighbors did on Liberacce!

In regards to Issue 18, Tracy Kent wrote about rigor mortis in the letters column. Before people start in with "how the hell would you know?!" My credentials: I used to work for a mortuary handling removals, dressing cases and the like, even so far as handling the County Coroner contracts where we bagged the bodies and then taxied them from the scene to the county fridge. Well over 1000!

Let me clarify something once and for all as I'm tired of people stating this. While Tracy is somewhat right about what he says in regards to Rigor Mortis, he is also wrong. True rigor sets in after the deceased has been such for a prolonged period of time. True, this renders the corpse all but immobile. BUT, the effects are only temporary. Corpses fall out of rigor after a few days. The corpses then become pliable again and is a further step towards decomposition. This is also a key factor in the Coroner's timetable in determining how long the deceased has been such.

Sorry it took so long to write in.

Sincerely,
Reaper
Editor-in-Chief
The NAM: National Airsoft Magazine

P.S. Every October, we host an airsoft event for the Halloween season called Operation: Biohazard which gives people the chance to live the zombie experience...from both sides! <http://www.nationalairsoftmagazine.com/biohazardhome.html>

Thanks for all that cheerful talk rigor mortis. Maybe I should be checking these links out before plugging them, eh? Maybe... maybe later.

Letter Hacks,

First off, let me congradulate Charlie Adlard and Tony Moor on their Eisner nominations.

Second, let me congradulate Robert Kirkman for making "the must list" in issue 826/827 of Entertainment Weekly (page 74). I love their magazine and think that you really deserve the honor.

I am still digging the book. I still can't wait to get the next issues. Still love the characters, covers (a poster of issue 18 would be framed and hung in the house), art and basically the whole damn thing!

You mentioned in the letters column that us fuckers better like the letters columns. I assure you, I love the letters column and I know that a friend of mine 3 states away does too. Whenever we talk, we end up talking about TWD.

I really liked issue 19. When 18 had finished I was kind of shocked that Dexter was kicking everyone out. I recall in one of the letter hacks (around the mid-teens) you saying that the prison was going to be around for a while. Now that I have finished 19, it doesn't look like they are going anywhere anytime soon.

Yeah, I should keep a closer eye on my comments here so that I can make sure I don't spoil any future cliffhangers from now on.

I honestly want to see them in the prison for a bit longer. I've read some of the readers want them on the run and in danger the whole time. That is always good entertainment, but I have always liked the challenge characters face when trying to rebuild their lives after a catastrophe. I still say that this is why the original Dawn of the Dead was better than the remake. They tried to "live" in the Mall even with a baby on the way. They tried to create a sense of normality knowing the hordes of zombies are out there. In the remake, it was like they were just waiting it out. I think there is a lot more you can do IN the prison with your characters, than you can on the run.

I agree.

I like how you encourage your readers to write in with questions and the fact that you answer them. I know there must be a lot that you just can't fit into the book, but you filling us in with what we ask about is the biggest reason I read the letter hacks. A lot of people have had some good questions that I didn't even bother to think about, you answer them, I go back and read your books again (usually for the 3rd time). So, of course, I have a few more questions for you:

1) How in the hell did Andrew manage to find his way into A block if it was locked down? (or was that what Dexter wanted everyone to think, but it was just crawling with zombies)

The prison is more or less completely unlocked now that the electricity is out. Also, the guards last act before they abandoned the place was to set the prisoners free to they could fend for themselves and after that they left the place more or less unlocked.

2) After Andrew managed to get into A block, how did he get past all the Zombies to get the guns and get back out alive?

Dexter was with him, and he knew the area pretty well. Luck was on their side as well.

3) Most importantly, why in the hell didn't Andrew (I'm seeing a pattern here) tell Dexter about all the zombies? Dexter seemed quite suprised to see them. (or did Andrew mess up, and forget to lock up behind him?)

A-Block is a pretty big place. Roamers only roam if they have something to roam to. Dexter and Andrew could have traveled to the armory in A-Block when all the zombies were spread out inside. They could have only encountered one or two zombies on the way there and on the way out. But all the zombies in the place would have heard them and would have started moving toward them, to the door that Andrew left open. Why he left the door open is still up for debate, and may even be revealed somewhere don't the line... I mean, I had to keep Andrew alive for a reason right?

4) If Andrew was cunning enough to get in, get some guns and get out, does this mean we are going to see him again? He could really become quite a pain to the survivors if he wants revenge on Rick

for taking his home and killing his lover.

All will be revealed (hey, I gotta get something from Bendis for putting my number on NEWSARAMA.)

(Questions done.)

I really like the addition of the female character in 19. We have referred to her as the zombie tamer, but I'm sure you will give her a name. I think the possibilities with this character are endless. She's another woman. She's been out in the world and survived. She could make things better or make them worse. Only you know and I'm sure you won't let us down.

You also mentioned "Hershel is very religious. You'll be hearing more from him on the subject as time goes on." Thanks! Hershel is one of my favorite characters and its nice to know that you have plans, other than zombie food, for him.

See, that's what I mean... I never should have said that. Forget I said that. Hershel could die at any moment. I swear.

I am SO glad to hear the book is on solid ground.

Keep up the good work (even if it comes out late)

Mike Gineman
Wauseon, OH

P.S., I told myself that I wouldn't write in to a comic book again, but your book is just THAT good. Damn you for making me embrace my geek-hood.

Welcome to the dark side, GEEK!

Kirkman,

Well yeah this is my first letter to a comic and all that and the book is really great and all sorts of compliments you've heard a million times before. My main reason for writing is to be an annoying fan and point out that those two armless zombies that got their heads cut off in issue 19 by that new character mysteriously grew arms when they were laying dead on the ground. Now maybe there is something in the zombie mythology that I missed that explained this but I do not know (if zombies started immediately regenerating that would just make things crazy). It just struck me as odd to see something like that get through without someone saying "Hey those zombies don't have arms!". Maybe 20 years from now when the whole alien arc is through you can go back and do special editions adding in animated side kicks and removing extra appendages. Oh and while I am here let me compose a list of questions.

You didn't know cutting the head off a zombie made them grow arms? How do you think all those four armed corpses keep popping up? Read the handbook, silly.

1) Pretty early on the characters started referring to the zombies as zombies. They just automatically knew what they were. Does this mean that they live in a world that contains Romero films and fiction zombie stories previous to the incident? It didn't seem like they had to come up with the word on their own. Well that is really the only question I have but I felt like making a list none the less. Everything about the book is great. Thanks.

-Dustin Sims

The term "zombie" existed long before Romero's movies. I think of this book taking place in our world. Only their October 2003 went a little different than ours (that's when I picture this book starting). So with that in mind... all our movies would have existed for them. I doubt anyone in the book so far is a Romero fan. I mean, they certainly haven't MENTIONED anything.

Dear Dead Heads

I don't think you guys need to be told that the book is great but I'll do it anyway. Great book. Love the artwork, love the story. This is the best comic since Valiant comics. The story comes first and that's what is most

important. I know that you don't want to water down TWD but I would love a mini series about anything. (anything?) The beginning of the outbreak would be great to see Shane as a good guy would be cool. Now that I'm done sucking up, I'll get to the point. I want to be a zombie. Is there any way for me to send a picture of myself and be drawn as a zombie? I'd love to be one of the zombies that kills a major character. If at all possible I would also like to buy the artwork of the comic I would be in.

Thanks for writing a great book.
Jason.

I'll have to think about that whole having real people appear as zombies thing. I could talk to Charlie about it. Maybe we'll run a contest.

Dear Mr. Kirkman,

I just finished reading Walking Dead #19. A truly great issue!!! I really dug the cover to this one. Before reading it I as thinking: Wow! Who is this bad-ass chick with the sword? I really like Tony Moore's art, but I'm in no way complaining about Charlie Adlard's, just try to keep Tony on the covers as long as you can. They're truly cool! And also, applause to you for creating such a great story. This book is excellent and the writing is great, not just an awesome zombie story, but a story that I think people who aren't especially into zombie stuff could enjoy, too, if they'd give it the chance. Bottom line: This story is great!!! It's really turning into the "zombie movie that never ends" vision that you mentioned in the introduction of the first trade. Again, kudos to YOU, Mr. Moore, Mr. Adlard, Mr. Rathburn, and anyone else who has ever influenced or had a hand in this great tale that's got us all begging for more at the end of each issue.

And now the questions:

1. In the above-mentioned introduction to the first trade (and forgive me if you've already addressed this) you said that you wanted this book "to be a chronicle of years of Rick's life". Is this still the case? You mentioned that no character is safe and I just wondered if this pertained to Rick as well. Is this truly Rick's story? Maybe (FAR in the future, hopefully) you'll end the series with Rick getting killed. Maybe he'll be

offed
in issue #20. Who knows?
Just thought I'd ask...

So far, yes--this is RICK'S story. But I'm not opposed to killing him if the opportunity to tell better stories as a result presented itself. Trust me when I say NOBODY is safe.

2.Why did Tyrese tell Rick that he should rethink his no killing stance? Is he planning something? Did he already do something that would prompt him to say this?

Well, Tyreese himself had killed Chris not too long ago and he just witnessed Rick killing Dexter. I think Tyreese meant neither of them were following it so Rick should probably rethink it.

3. Why did Rick ask the chick with the sword (We haven't found her name out have we?) to give up all of her weapons? Will this be a standard practice for any newcomers to the prison? I guess she'd have to prove herself trustworthy in order to regain her weapons, but when and if she does, GIVE HER THAT SWORD BACK!!! She was awesome with it, man!!!!

The group will be very cautious around all newcomers after the things they went through with the prisoners. It's something Lori has been nagging about since Tyreese showed up. It just took Rick a while to catch on.

4. Is that Lori who's "alone" on the sneak peek of the cover of issue #20? Oh well, I guess by the time you print this, I'll already know... Maybe Rick DOES die in issue #20! Hmmm.

Maybe.

Well, I guess that's all the questions I can think of off the top of my head for now. Hey, put my vote in with all those who have requested a poster. That would really be cool. And keep up the good work all of you guys! This is a damn fine book!!!

Lloyd Duvall, Jr.

At this point I think it's only a matter of time until we get the poster.

Kirkman,

Hey, I was going to write you a letter as soon as I was done reading issue 19, but didn't... Yesterday I saw your little write up in Entertainment Weekly and thought that I should write to say 'way to go' and 'superdupper' and all that sort of thing and then say what I was gonna say in the first place. I was a little bummed that they used a picture from Invincible and focused on that more... mostly because I haven't got around to reading it yet...but now that your working on a script for it I guess I should get caught up before the movie comes out and I have to get the TPB that says 'Now a major motion picture' or whatever.

That being:

1) Oh my freaking crap! That issue 19 is off the hook! (As they say in poor neighborhoods.)

What's THAT supposed to mean?

2) That is an interesting claim...the one about people being able to see your balls from outer space... I don't think I'm really astronaut material, and have never minded that...until now....

You're saying you WANT to see my balls?

3) You said that you were only about 90 or 95 percent sure you were coming to Chicago, well, you should go for sure! I would be happy...so you should come....you know, IF the town is big enough for you AND your balls....

It's not, but I'll come anyway. I'll be there, selling my stuff and signing autographs.

4) OK, what is the thing with Milla Jovovich? Obviously she is a pretty ok actor (Messenger, Dummy, Million Dollar Hotel) but that cannot save the second rez-evil flick. IN WHICH she really doesn't even act...OR fight Zombies... there was a HUGE lack of zombies in that second one...ugh...anyway, I am interested in hearing some real reasons for your putting her on such a pedestal because it seems like an infatuation...

Guilty as charged.

5) The first time I wrote in (I think that was in issue 13, if that even matters) I told you to read The Zombie Survival Guide...well, I'd like to apologize for being reader number one million to do so. Some how I didn't catch that until I was reading all the issues over again...ANYWAY! This comic is now my cornerstone of comics. It really is. Pass my gratitude on to your art team as well please. Here's looking forward to issue 75!

David

Charlie, Cliff... you heard the man.

I just caught the tail end of "Dawn of the Dead" and the beginning of "Dream of the Dead" on IFC. Apparently we can expect the first reoccurring character ever in Romero's Zombie movies, one of the biker guys from Dawn is comming back as a zombie in Land. I'm dissapointed, I wanted him to come back alive. I would have liked to hear about his life on the road, how he was able to survive. That's why I like your comic.

Ken Lindgren

Obviously, he wasn't able to survive. That's Tom Savini, though... you can't really be a zombie fan and not know who he is.

I don't blame Rick one freaking bit for taking that shithead out!!!! One quick question, one of the zombies had a cat hat on, like the one the earlier survivor that got bit before they left Atlanta. Same guy? Great book and love the team-up shit.
Bobby W.

Chamberlain
P.s. posters would ssssssssssssoooooooooooooo rock!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Not the same guy. Sorry.

Hi,
Never written before, just been a voyeur up to now, but I've been thinking; how much do the opinions of those who

have read your work matter to you?

More than they should, I think. I really do care if you guys like this stuff. I'm doing it for ME, but I'm also doing it for YOU.

You obviously have a passion for the work that you do, and you've had to struggle to get your work recognized and published. Is the satisfaction for you in just getting the work out there, or is it the feedback that you get from people, good, bad and indifferent?

A little of both, actually. I think I'm prolific because I get a great deal of satisfaction just from getting the work out there. But I wouldn't be able to continue to do that if you kids didn't like the stuff. So the feedback is important too. As long as you realize that only 10% or less of the people reading this stuff are actually responding with feedback. At the end of the day, sales are the only feedback.

Now I'm guessing, but I would have thought that you would assume a kind of musician's view- that you make stuff you like and hope others like it too, or you would cry yourself to sleep at night from the adrenalin-fuelled-double-Y-chromosome rants that you must receive. But what about those who buy and never read?

What started this line of thought was that I recently got chatting to a guy I've never met before and it came up that we both liked comics (which is nice because it's fairly unusual to find round here these days). But as we talked it came out that while we bought similar comics, I buy them to read and he buys them, bags them and either adds them to his collection or sells them on at a profit without ever reading them.

EEK!

I couldn't quite get my head round the idea that he buys some very thought-provoking or at least damn good stories and then never turns a page, never gets beyond the front cover. I mean as a hobby it's fine, it's no different than say- collecting vintage bottles of wine and not drinking them. But I couldn't get the creators out of my head (please leave by the way- I need sleep without the zombie monkey dreams), the writer and artist put a lot of themselves and a lot of passion into the story only for it never to be read but sit behind a CGC approved DNA-proof force field or whatever. I realize (or at least hope) that practices like this are fairly rare but there must still be quite a few people who do this, who collect for the sake of collecting. Indeed when I said that my spare room is nearly full to bursting with comics, the guy couldn't understand why I wouldn't sell them all, "I read them" didn't quite cut it. I just got a response filled with price estimates and CGC gradings. Even comics I don't read or like very much any more I pull out and give to my nephews (hi Joe, Bill & Fred!) so they can get the pleasure out of reading them as I did when I was their age.

So, does that bother you as a writer, never to have your work read, or are you pleased with it, regardless of who reads it (or not)?

Just a thought.
Dale Phillips.

If the question is: would I continue to do the book if I knew that NO ONE was reading it and they were just bagging it and storing it of a later sale? Yeah, I think I would. I mean, I certainly don't like to hear that people aren't reading my work or looking at Charlie and Cliff's work, but I do the work because I like doing it, and it happens to pay the bills.

I would probably enjoy it less if I though the majority of the people weren't even reading it, but really, it's no different than an art

patron. I mean, it's someone paying you to make the art you would enjoy doing anyway, right?

Luckily, I think most people read these things so this is kind of a moot point.

Kirkman:

Just a quick note to say how bitchin' #19 was. One thing, though: during the fight scene, all the humans are standing as a front, so the zombies don't surround them, and all the zombies are coming from one place, which is in front of them, right? So I know it's just a comic book and all, but how did that one zom' manage to get behind Dexter? Just a silly question, but one that will keep me up nights if not answered.

They were slowly backing away from where they had started when the zombies attacked. They were moving backwards through the prison grounds, which are not strictly blocked out like a hallway. The zombie that attacked Dexter took a short cut to get to where they were on the prison grounds. It all makes sense if you look at it that way.

I was in my local shop last month, amped about the Romero flick, looking for zom' comix, and hadn't even heard about TWD, becuz I am ill-informed about everything. By luck I found the 3rd TPB, which was shamefully buried beneath a stack of Marvel Essentials. I also found, not buried beneath a stack, but on the shelf for all to see, Romero's Toetags, and an updated version of Deadworld. When I brought my comix up to Al the Comic Book Guy, he said, dollar signs flashing in his eyes, "You're into the horror stuff, huh?" I copped to having a zombie fetish. He said, "You and a bunch of other people. I sell a lot of these," and he pointed at the Vol. 3 TPB. Then he said he wasn't into zombies, that he preferred "real monsters." The poor fool! With that kind of attitude, he'll be one of the first to be infected, when the shit goes down.

Anyway, I thought Toetags and King Zombie were both humdrum but TWD, man...what can I say that hasn't already been said in that long-ass letter column of yours, which is also totally and completely bitchin', by the way. Every comic should have a letter column that runs as long as the comic itself. Do you get any mail from people who DON'T like TWD?

A sure fire way to get printed in this letters column is to send negative mail. I don't get much so I print every one I do get. Of course, now that I've said that... I'm going to get nothing but negative mail from here on out.

Now that I've gushed, babbled, AND asked two stupid questions, this fanboy will sign off, but not before plugging the Zombie News Network, at www.zombienews.blogspot.com. Thanks to all involved for putting out a fucking awesome comic book.

The
Right Reverend Potere O.
Occulto III

Man, a lot of URL plugs in this issue.

Dear Kirkman,
Issue 19... "Cry me a river"... holy shit, I laughed out loud at that one. Rick's becoming quite the psycho... that's neat. And that katana-wielding chick is definitely cool. A cool thing. Is Rick going to nail her? Ah, well, I guess we'll see...LAND OF THE DEAD... how... disappointing??? I'm not really sure how I feel about it yet. It was not as good as the wicked DAWN remake, that's for bloody sure. What did you think? You're into that zombie stuff, right? Here're some critiques on LAND... Hey, don't have the TUCKER character from the remake of DAWN be a lead zombie. It just distracts. Plus that guy's a bad Canadian actor. I'm Canadian so I can say that. And also don't have that other cheerleading zombie be an actress from a zillion commercials. Did you recognize that bouncy pony-tailed cheerleader zombie from the "Rolo-chocolate-cone" and "Peak Freans" ads? Stupid.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? Are these Canadian commercials? Who watches THOSE?

What did you think about the zombie's having...like..."feelings". Like when that gas-pumping zombie put that other flaming zombie out of its misery... was that weird? I thought so. I thought if Romero was going to make the zombies smarter, that would be cool and scary, but they're so evolved that they're just like regular people, except they eat skin. Ehn...not so scary. Leguizamo was basically the best thing in the movie. Oh, there's a movie called, The Ghouls, with a few actors that people would recognize, and it's about zombies... have you seen it? Don't. Anyway, I like YOUR zombies. They never change, they don't have feelings, or ever look up into the sky and give an painfully emotional, "Waahgghh..." Please keep up the GOOD work.

Now Charlie Adlard is a great artist, I think issue 19 was his best so far, but... now this is just a harmless question... are you going to switch up the artist again anytime soon? Don't hit me! Just asking...

That's up to Charlie. As far as I'm concerned, he can draw this book as long as he wants to.

AND, LOVE the little zombie facts you give, like how those armless, jawless zombies somehow make it so that tough-girl isn't attacked... those are just the little quirky things in your zombie universe that make it YOUR universe, and no one else's. Rathburn needs some praise. PRAISE RATHBURN. He sure can... gray tone. No, really, he's great too.

Thanks for the only comic I buy.
YOU GUYS KILL!
Stephen Lacombe

Rathburn is the man. He's also a great artist on his own as well. He just finished up Fantastic Four: Foes with me and is starting work on a new Image series that I'll be keeping under wraps for the time being. He keeps busy in-between toning sessions on this book.

Letter Hacks

It's gonna be hard to write a letter without sounding like a complete kiss-ass, but here goes...

Well, I've just put down issue 19 of TWD and I gotta say... damn fine work once again guys. This issue just doesn't let up.

I'm liking the new character introduced in this issue. By the time this goes to print, no doubt she's been fleshed out (and from what I've seen from Tony's future covers in Previews, gets involved in a BIG way) and I'm looking forward to reading that, but for now, hot damn she kicked all angles of zombie ass in this issue. Nice! The fact that Rick popped Dexter in the noodle amidst the chaos was a nice touch too. Sure, it was to save the group as a whole, but it should be interesting seeing how Rick adapts to such harsh actions (Charlie's last panel spoke a thousand words if you ask me - such is the power of his art).

Heh, I bought that page... what a GREAT image that was.

Being a lifelong fan of comics, I've floated from title to title like a funnybook vampire waiting for the next gem to leech off. I think the last title I followed so religiously was Augustyn and Ramos's Crimson, and that bad boy finished a loooong time ago. Then, after many months of reading a few titles that started strong but ultimately began to fall, I read some of the buzz for the Walking Dead. It just sounded like the kind of book I would enjoy. So I joined the club with Issue 7 and a shiny new first TPB.

Boy was I blown away.

And since then, I think the Walking Dead is the only comic I religiously look forward to in that nice bundle that I order online. In a sea of zombies ideas/stories/games/films... this book sails over all of them. Don't get me wrong... like many other folks, I love a nice slice of zombie action (why are so many people attracted to working with walking corpses? cant be the smell) when its done right - its just a shame that its done right on so few an occasion. I think its the character work that I love the most. Even if the character is despicable, their demise will have an impact. That sort of thing doesn't usually happen in comics. There's none of the 'Bang. you're dead. oh well, never mind' thought process's that normally happen. So thumbs up to (the self-confessed shut in) you yourself Kirkman. This is an ongoing piece of class.

Just because I spend most of my time at home... doesn't mean I'm a shut in. My house is just really cool. I've got everything I need right now. Oh, and it's frigging summer time, it's HOT outside... why would I want to go out in the heat?

Art wise - I don't think there's a better combination than the Moore/Adlard/Rathburn connection. Sure, I was one of those that, at a first glance at issue 7 said 'oh... the art has changed', but Adlard is fast becoming a force of nature when it comes to this book, colour me happy on that one! Speaking of colour, I don't think enough things are said about Cliff Rathburn's gray tones, and for a guy who brandishes a mean pencil in his own right, he sure knows how to splash the tones for maximum impact (Oh, and if anyone's reading this, be sure to pick up Rathburns 'Reaper' trade if you can. It's a quality piece of work).

Yes, the ART at least in Reaper is second to none.

Speaking of quality pieces of work, you may be pleased to know that reading this led me down a path to purchase two of your Brit trades and a few Invincible issues. Great stuff, and I recommend it all to my fellow comic book reading buddies regularly. But then again, I'm from the mindset that anyone who writes a book called Battle Pope can do no wrong anyway LOL.

Anyway, back to the shuffling dead...

Another thing I like about this book is the unexpected element of it all. I've never known a book to surprise me at least once from issue to issue (and its refreshing to see someone actually back up the 'no-one is safe' talk with some surprising and horrific deaths - kudos to Mr. Kirkman). This certainly is one book that no one can predict - and I think that's part of why it just keeps on growing like it has (and rightfully so, the day I hear this book has been cancelled, I think I'll eat my own face - and does anybody want that on their conscience?! Thought not).

Overall, consider me a lifelong Walking Dead reader (not literally of course, though after a heavy night out, I sometimes resemble one of your decaying ghouls the next morning).

I'm not going to be another of those dudes who asks if Rick's going to go back to find more survivors, or to give you my five cents on where I think the story should go. You know what you're doing, and for all intents and purposes, you guys can drive this wagon all the way over a cliff and back again if that's how you feel. This is one reader who is just happy to be along for the ride.

Until the dead start walking in my neighbourhood and I'm forced to fight them off with a shovel... Keep up the good work guys!

Vince Hunt
UK

p.s: I'm sure I got some shit on my lips from all that ass kissing, but f**k it, this is the first of no doubt a few letters ill send to the funkotron collective, so its best to get it out the way in one hit.

We enjoy a good ass kissing from time to time. So no harm done.

And that'll do it for this month. Man, it seems like these things are getting LONGER.

Thanks for reading folks. I'll see you all back here next month.

-Robert Kirkman

CHARACTERS



RICK

status: alive

Rick was a small town cop before the zombie plague hit. He has become the leader of the group he has sought refuge with.

relations:
LORI (wife)
CARL (son)



SHANE

status: dead

Shane was Rick's partner. An unhealthy infatuation for Lori drove him insane. He eventually tried to kill Rick, but was shot by Carl moments before he could pull the trigger.

relations:
none



MORGAN

status: unknown

Morgan and his son Duane have taken up residence in Rick's old neighbor's house. Little is known of thier current whereabouts.

relations:
DUANE (son)



DUANE

status: unknown

Duane and his father have taken up residence in Rick's old neighbor's house. Duane likes to talk about bodily functions.

relations:
MORGAN (father)

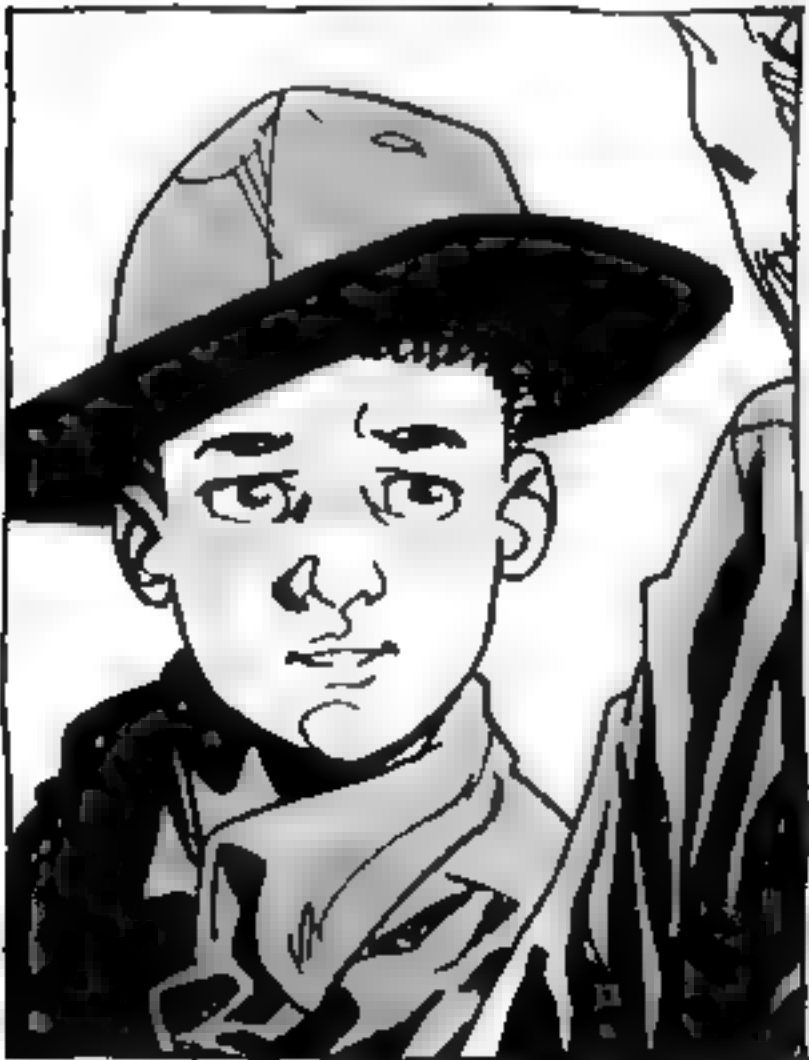


LORI

status: alive

Lori had an affair with Rick's partner Shane and is now pregnant. It is unknown who the child's father is. Rick is unaware of the affair.

relations:
RICK (husband)
CARL (son)

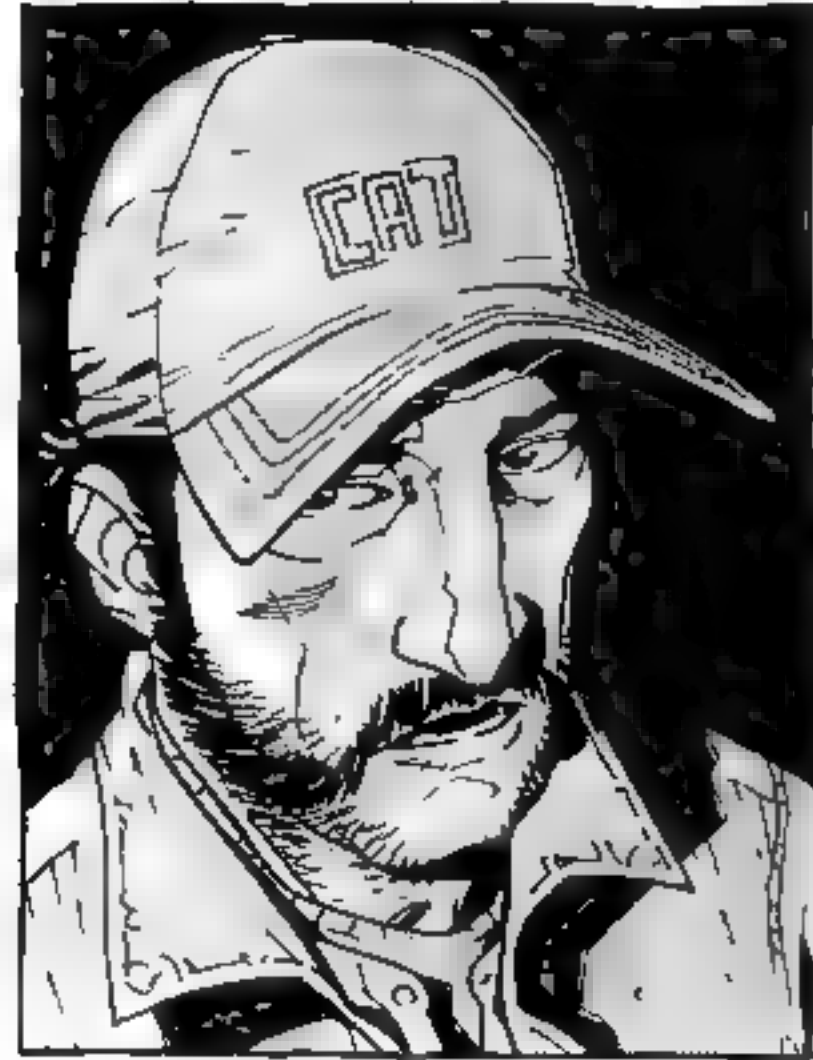


CARL

status: alive

Carl has saved his father's life but in doing so he has killed a man. The incident still weighs heavey on his conscience.

relations:
RICK (father)
LORI (mother)
SOPHIA (girlfriend)



JIM

status: dead

Jim watched his entire family get slaughtered as he escaped Atlanta. He was the first in the camp to die of a zombie bite.

relations:
none



ALLEN

status: alive

Allen is still haunted by the death of his wife. His grief is so severe he has begun to neglect his children.

relations:
DONNA (wife)
BEN & BILLY (sons)



DONNA

status: dead

Donna was the most outspoken person in the camp. She was killed by zombies in Wilshire Estates.

relations:
ALLEN (husband)
BEN & BILLY (sons)



BEN & BILLY

status: alive

Twin sons of Allen and Donna. They really don't say much. Especially after the death of thier mother.

relations:
ALLEN (father)
DONNA (mother)



GLENN

status: alive

Glenn was the camp scavenger, always venturing into Atlanta in search of goods. He had a crush on Carol but is now with Maggie, Hershel's daughter.

relations:
MAGGIE (girlfriend)



DALE

status: alive

After losing his wife Dale met up with Amy and Andrea on his way to Atlanta. After Amy's death he and Andrea fell in love.

relations:
ANDREA (girlfriend)

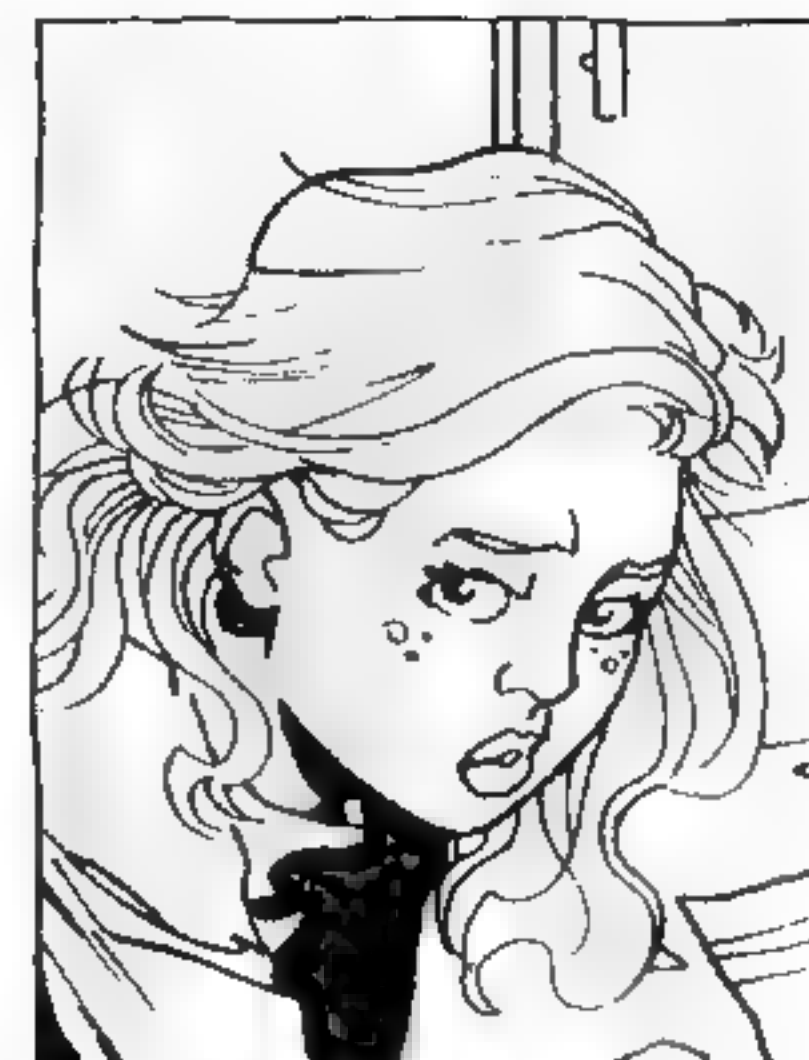


CAROL

status: alive

Carol is insecure and very timid. She and Lori have become close friends. She is currently with Tyreese.

relations:
SOPHIA (daughter)
TYREESE (boyfriend)



SOPHIA

status: alive

After a long period of constant nagging, Sophia has convinced Carl to be her boyfriend. They hold hands.

relations:
CAROL (mother)
CARL (boyfriend)



ANDREA

status: alive

Andrea is the resident sharp shooter of the group. After watching her sister die, she's found comfort in the arms of Dale.

relations:
AMY (sister)
DALE (boyfriend)

CHARACTERS



AMY

status: dead

Andrea's fun loving younger sister. Died in Atlanta during the zombie attack where Jim was bitten.

relations:

ANDREA (sister)



TYREESE

status: alive

Tyreese has become a valuable member of the group after helping Rick during many zombie attacks. He's taking his daughter's death surprisingly well.

relations:

JULIE (daughter)
CAROL (girlfriend)



JULIE

status: dead

Julie and her boyfriend Chris formed a suicide pact in order to be together forever. Chris shot first and killed her before she could kill him.

relations:

TYREESE (father)
CHRIS (boyfriend)



CHRIS

status: dead

Chris was killed at the hands of Tyreese shortly after killing his daughter, Julie in a failed suicide attempt. Only Rick knows.

relations:

JULIE (girlfriend)



OTIS

status: alive

Otis was living on Hershel's farm for safety. He has stayed behind to take care of the livestock while preparations are being made to move them to the prison.

relations:

PATRICIA (ex-girlfriend)



HERSHEL

status: alive

After witnessing the deaths of nearly all of his children, he's not in a very good state of mind.

relations:

SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (sons)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (daughters)



MAGGIE

status: alive

Hershel's only living daughter. Currently involved with Glenn.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



BILLY

status: alive

Hershel's only living son.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
(brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



LACEY

status: dead

Hershel's eldest daughter. Killed by the zombies he kept in his barn.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARLNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



ARNOLD

status: dead

Hershel's second eldest son. Killed by his zombie brother, Shawn who Hershel kept in their barn.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE, RACHEL,
SUSIE (sisters)



RACHEL

status: dead

Hershel's second youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
SUSIE (sisters)



SUSIE

status: dead

Hershel's youngest daughter. Killed by Thomas, in the prison barber shop.

relations:

HERSHEL (father)
SHAWN, ARNOLD,
BILLY (brothers)
LACEY, MAGGIE,
RACHEL (sisters)



PATRICIA

status: alive

Otis' bleeding heart ex-girlfriend. Had a crush on Thomas. She's very misguided.

relations:

OTIS (ex-boyfriend)



AXEL

status: alive

One of the left over convicts from the prison. In for armed robbery. Little else is known.

relations:

none



THOMAS

status: dead

Serial killer. Killed Rachel and Susie, and attempted to kill Andrea before Rick beat him nearly to death and Maggie shot him.

relations:

none

CHARACTERS



ANDREW

status: unknown
Another convict, in for drug possession, selling, etc. Fell in love with Dexter, his cellmate.

relations:
DEXTER (boyfriend)



DEXTER

status: dead
Another convict, in for murdering his wife and her lover. Finds comfort in the arms of Andrew, his cellmate.

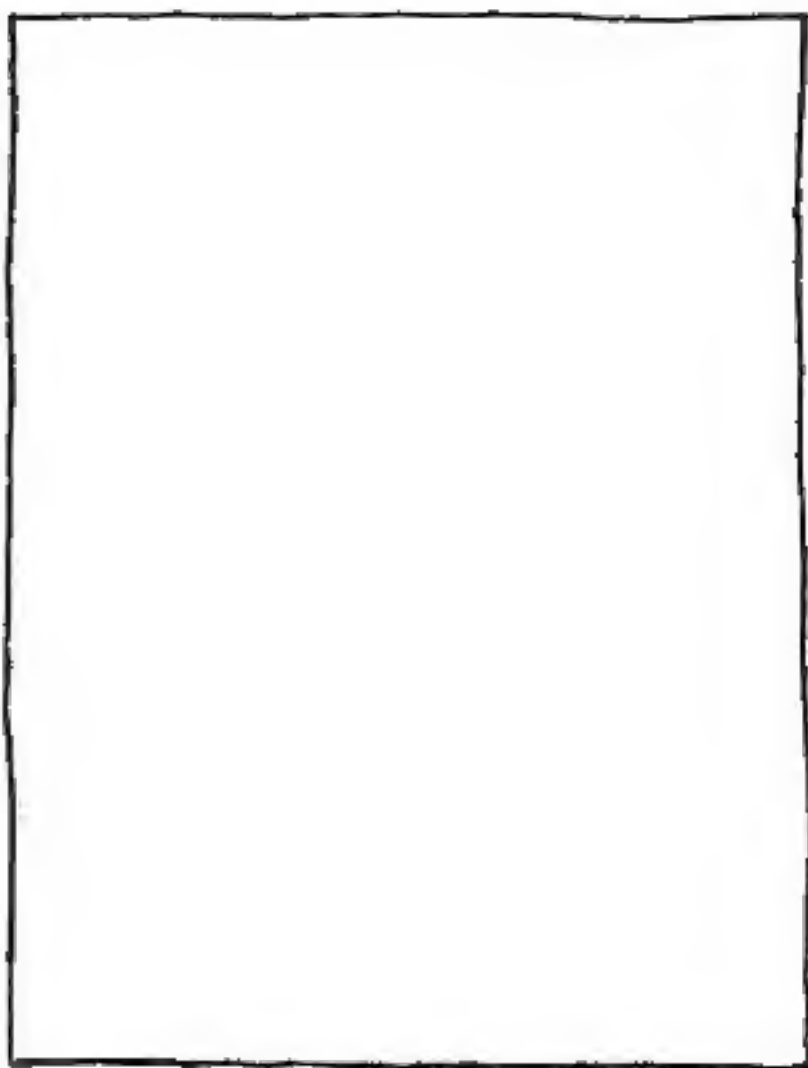
relations:
ANDREW (boyfriend)



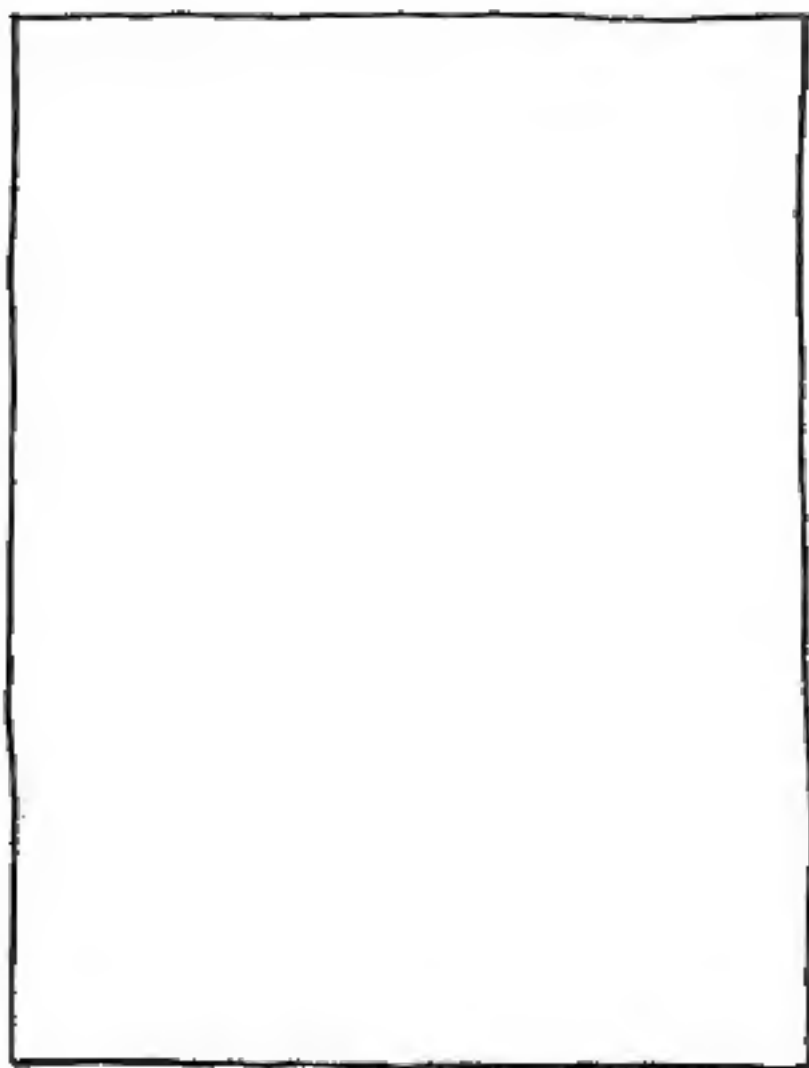
MICHONNE

status: alive
Little is currently known about Michonne.

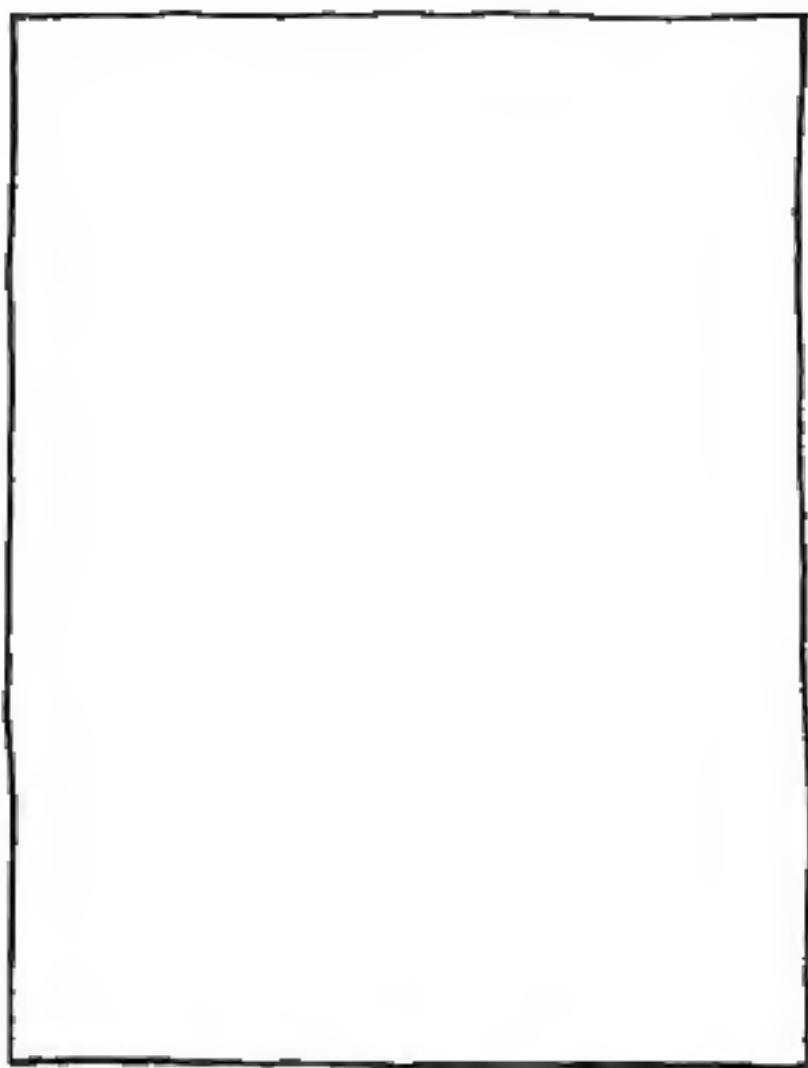
relations:
NONE



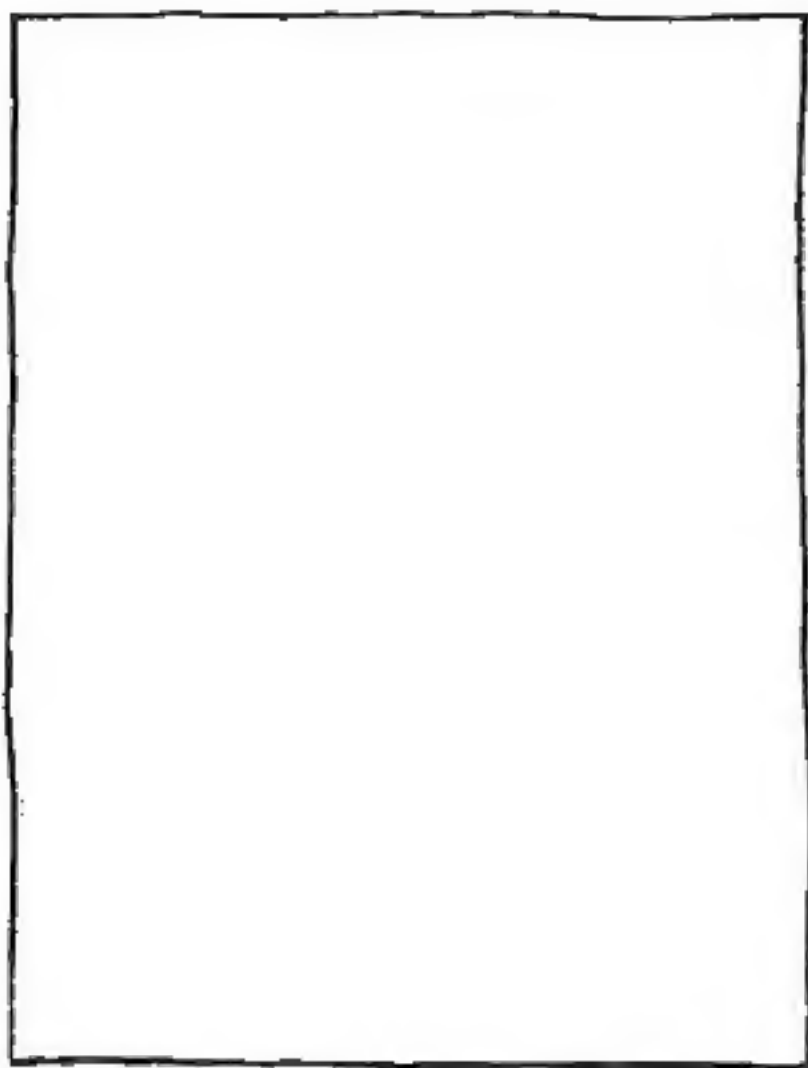
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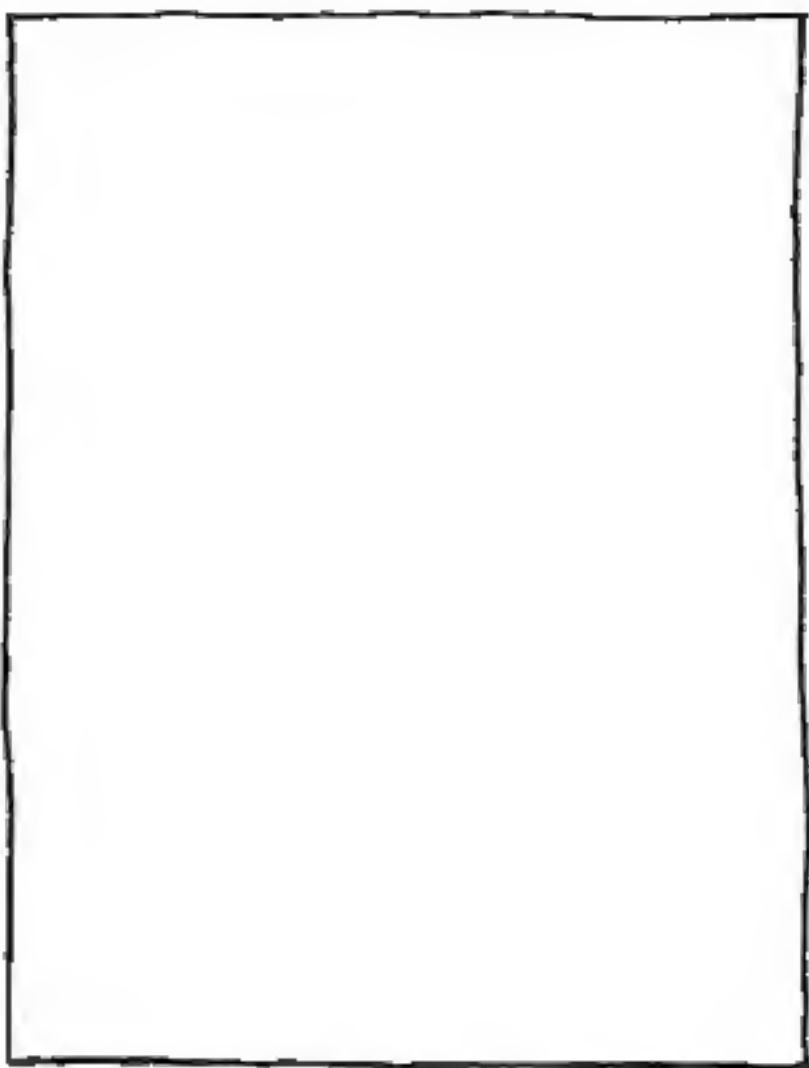
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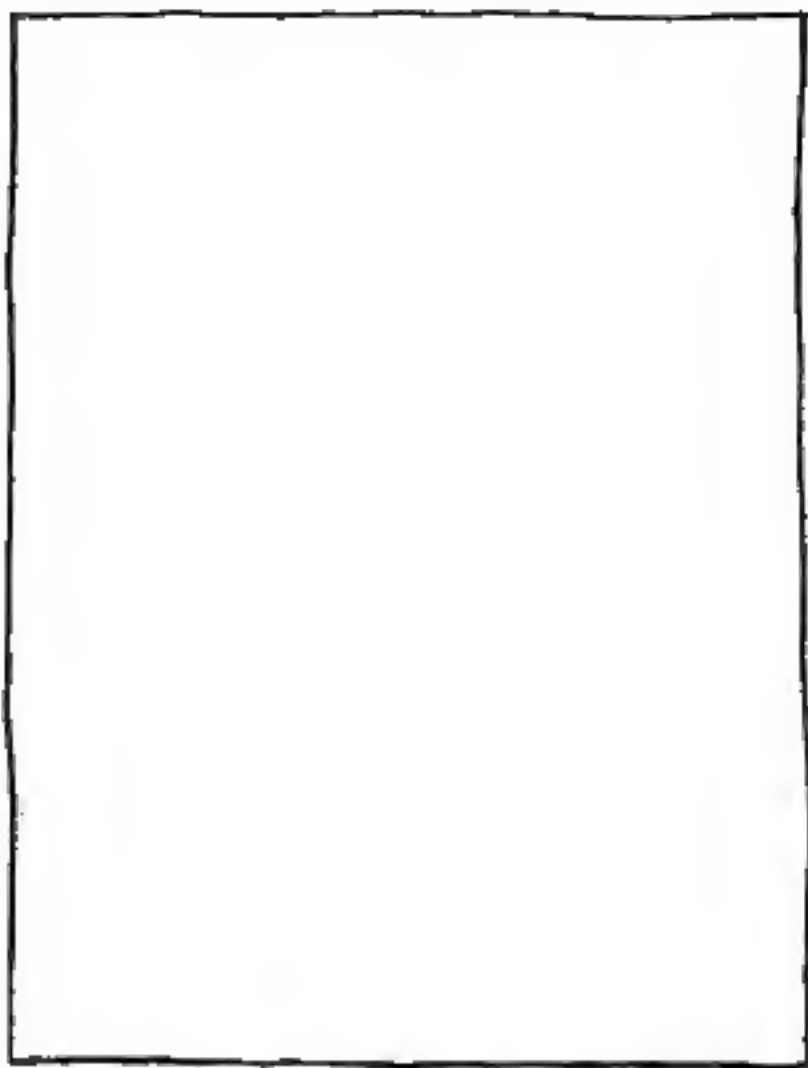
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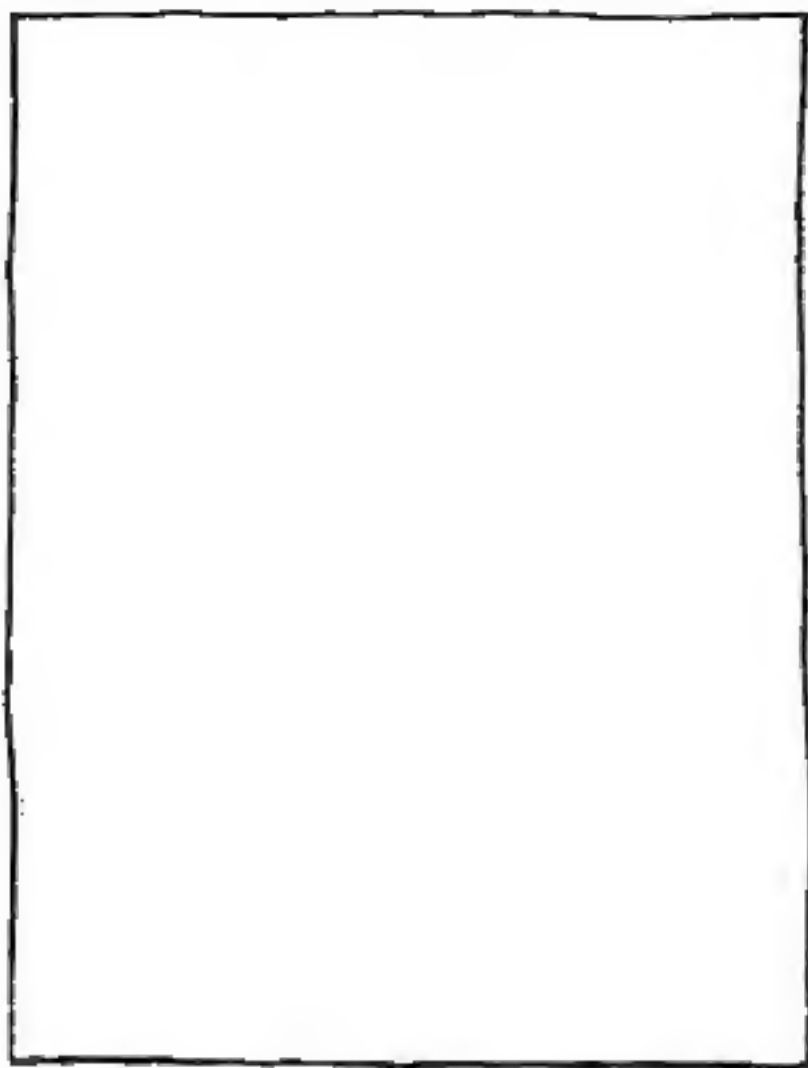
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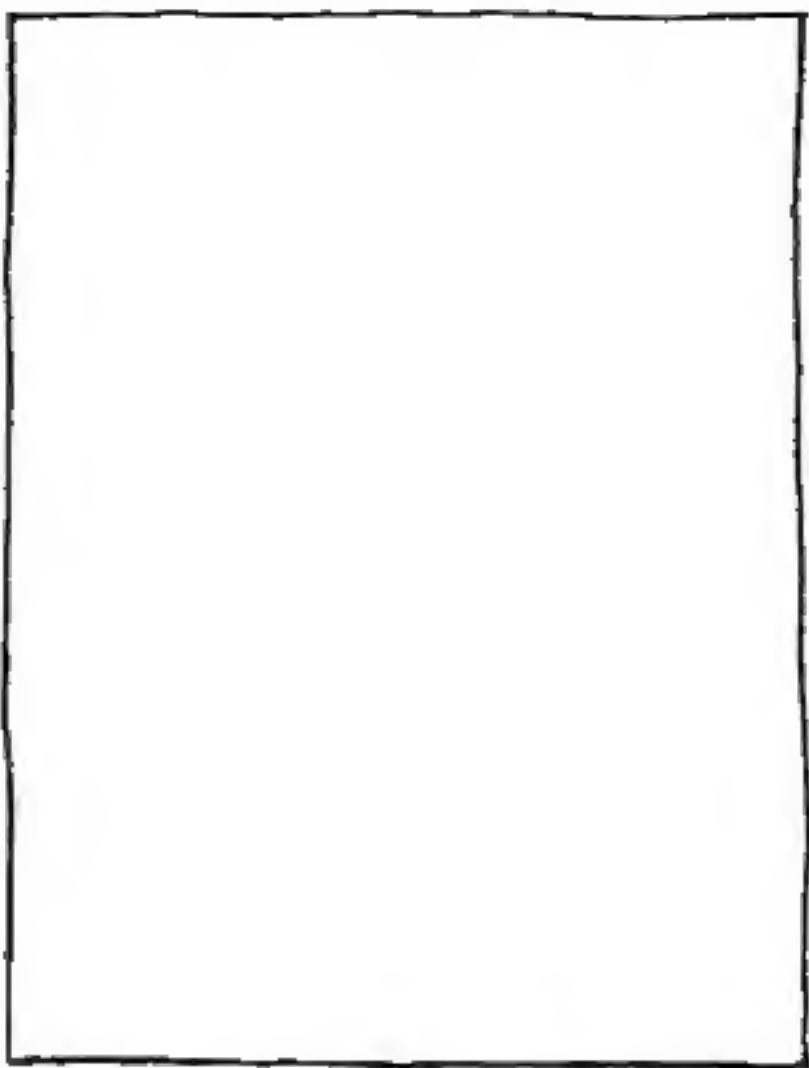
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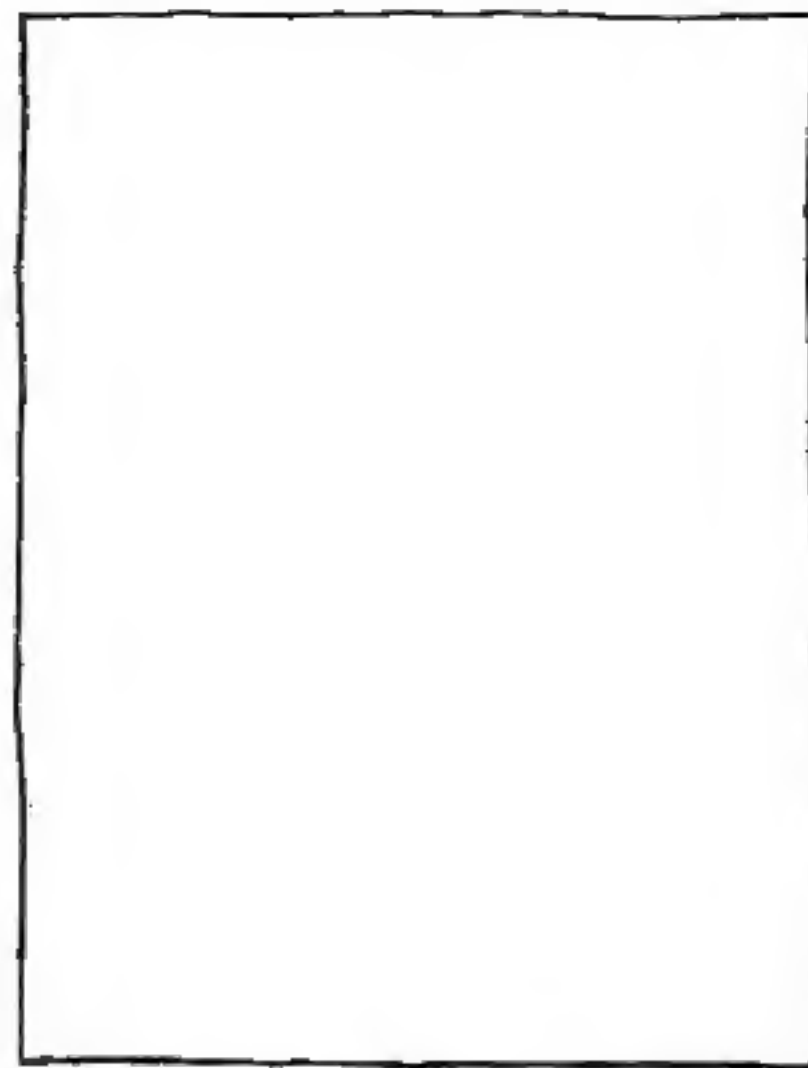
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FROM THE CREATORS OF
ULTRA



5

THE LUNA BROTHERS

GIRLS™

THE WALKING DEAD #21

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